

# ARABIAN ROMANCES AND FOLK TALES

H. I. KATIBAH

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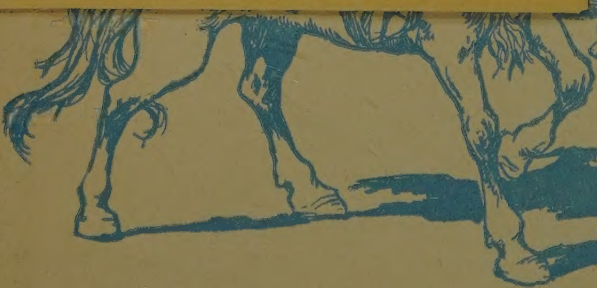
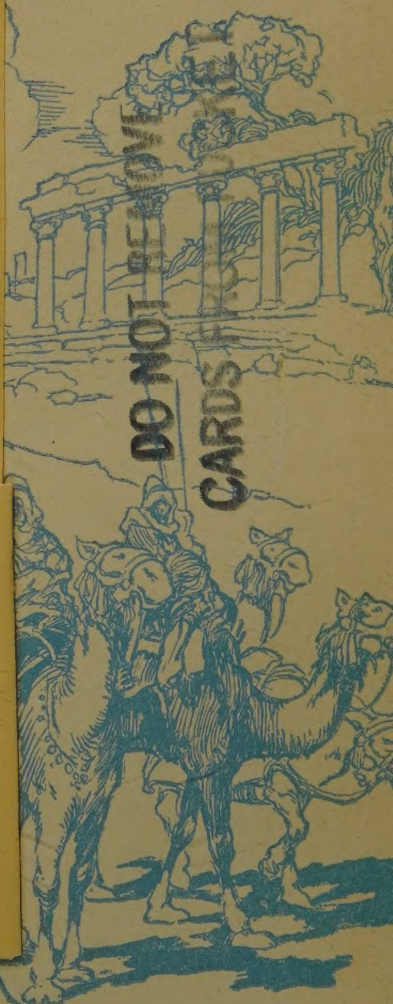
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Arabian romances and folk-  
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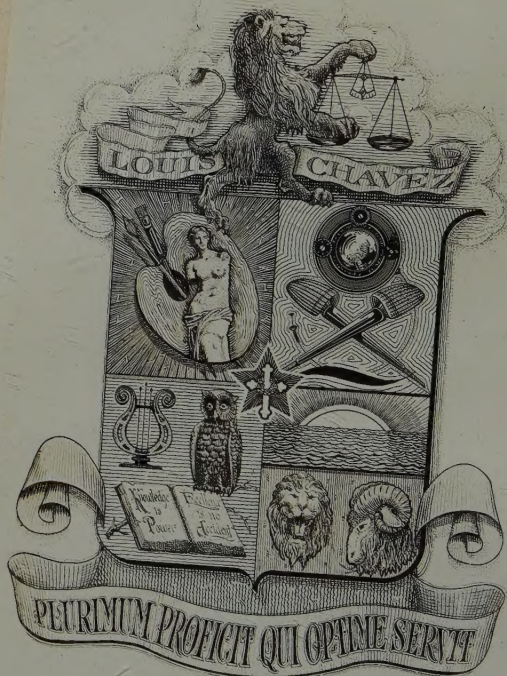
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ARABIAN ROMANCES





# ARABIAN ROMANCES AND FOLK-TALES

BY  
H. I. KATIBAH

A.B., BEIRUT  
S.T.M., HARVARD

ILLUSTRATED BY W. M. BERGER



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TO  
THE TOWNSFOLK OF KALAMOON, WHEREVER  
PEOPLE GATHER AROUND THE CALDRON  
TELLING TALES AS THEY WAIT FOR THE  
WHEAT TO BOIL

U. S. 1380211





## PREFACE

“TELL us another story!” is as satisfying a reward as any genuine story-teller could wish for.

But this demand often becomes a challenge when the imagination of the reader has been whetted by the first. When a second volume of stories, therefore, is involved the task may well become formidable.

The reception of my first book, *Other Arabian Nights*, by the press and by readers in general, particularly the host of young ones, intimations of whose pleased reaction came to me from quarters expected and unexpected alike, not only encouraged me to write this second one, but made me feel a kind of moral obligation to the thousands of youthful readers, whatever their ages may be, who, like *Oliver Twist*, have come with their empty bowls asking for more.

The present work is similar in some extent to the first. There are the same ubiquitous *jinn* and *marids*; the same tribe of sorcerers, magicians and enchanters; the same rewards and triumphs which await the good, the virtuous and the brave; the

same evil doom which overtakes the ungodly, however subtle their cunning and however prosperous their state may appear to be.

Yet the variations deserve special mention, and will give, I trust, a new treat to the readers of my first book.

In the first place, and to begin with the very first story, the secret of the *jinn*, their nature and the history of their relations with the human race, has at last come out. Hajj Abu-l-Khidr, who is your guide and mentor in this entangled maze of weird annals, speaks to you through the authority of weighty theologians and philosophic speculators. He gives you a version of the *jinn* history which, at one time, was quite prevalent, but which to-day finds credence among a thinning rank of believers, or in isolated spots which the onrushing stream of progress in the Near East has left in little eddies by its sides.

The realm of Arabic mythology, scant in itself, and mostly borrowed, but freely developed and richly enhanced by its Arab borrowers, is fairly represented in this volume, whereas it was completely wanting in the first one. "The Adventures of Alexander the Great," "The Golden City of Iram," "Ouj, the Son of Anak," and "The Ter-



restrial Visits of al-Khidr" not only have intrinsic value and interest to justify their inclusion, but are also typical and representative in nature. They are mentioned in the *Koran* or else are based on allusions therein. In the tale of "*Ouj*" the reference goes back even further to biblical times, and, in the later fantastic forms it assumed, is a growth of Jewish legendry.

Another distinctive feature is the introduction of very short folk-tales and anecdotes such as "The Art of Questioning," "Why He Rose Up Early," "The Tail of St. George's Dragon," etc.

For those still under the sway of Peter Pan who love their fairy-tales pure and unadulterated I commend the stories "After Distress—Relief," "The Tale of Clever Hasam" and "The Pasha's Only Daughter" with the pious hope that they will not fall short of their companions in the first volume.

As for those who ask for meat of a different kind; who clamour for *realistic* adventure and romance of fiery sheiks pursuing on horseback demure maidens (later saved by gallant rescuers in aëroplanes), this would be asking a little too much of one who has never been near aëroplanes, and who, though born on the edge of the Syrian Desert, has never met with sheiks of the movie brand.

One cannot, however, but lament the relative loss of the innocent sense of humor and buoyant imagination which could derive spiritual nurture even from the realms of the mythical and make-believe. One feels that something else "has dropped off into the sea" when, in the words of Clark F. Firestone, "the frontiers of ignorance had been pushed back . . . and there was no longer room for the phoenix to flap its wings, the dragons to hiss and roar, the giants to stalk, the kangaroo-man to hop."

As in my first book, my debt of gratitude to those who rendered me service by actual help or advice is extensive.

To Miss Bassiemee Katibah, Dr. N. A. Katibah, Mr. Azar H. Hanania, Mr. M. G. Coury and Mr. E. J. Audi, I am indebted for stories and suggestions, credit for which is given in the Table of Contents. For information about *the Hamidiyyah* I am obligated to Mr. Ghusn J. Ghusn of Methuen, Mass. A debt of equal obligation I owe to Miss Ida A. Pratt of the Oriental Room of the New York Public Library for her many valuable suggestions and the readiness with which she helped me in my researches. It was long after the plan of this book had been determined, and work actually

done on these stories, that Miss Pratt put in my hands the English translation of *The Wonders of India*, from the Arabic original of which the story of "Adventures of Arab Slave-Traders" is taken. Through the courtesy of Mr. S. A. Mokarzel, editor of *The Syrian World*, the inclusion of "The Golden City of Iram," which appeared in the November issue of that magazine, was made possible.

Once more I am happy to acknowledge the voluntary help which my friend Mr. Leo Rasche of the *New York Evening Post* has given me, by revising the copy of this MS. for the press, as he had done the MS. of *Other Arabian Nights*. Mr. Maxwell E. Perkins, chief editor of Charles Scribner's Sons, has given me again helpful editorial suggestions, for which I take this opportunity to express my gratefulness, as I do with equal pleasure to Mr. William M. Berger, the artist, whose genuine interest in the work he has done on this, as on the previous work, has been more than professional.

H. I. KATIBAH.

BROOKLYN, May, 1929.





## TABLE OF CONTENTS

PAGE

<b>THE JINNI OF YABRUD . . . . .</b>	<b>3</b>
--------------------------------------	----------

This tale is based on an anecdote told the author some fifteen years ago by Dr. N. A. Katibah who had heard it from Jurjus Sweid, a gifted story-teller of Yabrud.

The lore about the jinn in Abu-l-Khidr's discourse is taken from a curious passage in the "*Essays of the Brethren of Purity*," "*The Commentary of the Koran*," of Al-Tabari, "*Hills of Corals*," by Badr-ud-Din ash-Shibly, etc.

<b>THE TALE OF LITTLE JAMILAH WHO WAS STOLEN BY THE BEDWINS . . . . .</b>	<b>32</b>
---	-----------

A folk-tale of Kalamoon, submitted, with little change, by Miss Bassiemee Katibah. The verses are also hers.

<b>THE ART OF QUESTIONING . . . . .</b>	<b>46</b>
---	-----------

A folk-tale of Kalamoon.

<b>AFTER DISTRESS—RELIEF . . . . .</b>	<b>52</b>
--	-----------

From "*Selections of Dainties*," Cairo.

<b>THE SIMPLE SA-IDITE, OR THE WILES OF THE WOMEN OF CAIRO . . . . .</b>	<b>77</b>
--	-----------

Egyptian folk-tale.

<b>WHY HE ROSE EARLY . . . . .</b>	<b>95</b>
------------------------------------	-----------

Told to Mr. E. J. Audi, of New York, by the late Hon. Suleiman Bustany, author of the monumental translation of the Iliad from Greek to Arabic poetry.

<b>THE TALE OF CLEVER HASAN AND THE TALKING HORSE . . . . .</b>	<b>98</b>
---	-----------

Told to the author by Mr. Azar H. Hanania, of Lincoln, N. J.

	PAGE
THE JUDGMENT OF KARAKOUSH . . . . .	130
<p>Karakoush was a historic character, like Abu-l-Nawwas and Nasr-ud-Din Khuja, around whom many popular legends have been woven. His full name is Baha-ud-Din Ibn Abdullah al-Asdi Karakoush. He was a freed slave of the famous Saladin, and was appointed by him governor of Cairo and, at one time, of Acre, after it had been evacuated by the Crusaders. From what is known about him, Karakoush must have been an enterprising and upright governor. But his high station and the fact that he was a non-Arab stranger made him the target of malicious squibs of his contemporaries, particularly a certain Ibn Mimati, who wrote a book of frivolous anecdotes about him. The story in this collection, current in Arabic-speaking countries to-day, is based on one of these anecdotes, selections of which have been translated into French by M. Paul Casanova, and may be found in "<i>Memoire de la Mission Archéologique Française de Caire</i>," 1897, pp. 447-491.</p>	
THE FABLE OF THE LION AND THE BULL . . . . .	135
<p>Translated freely and condensed from the most famous book of fables in the world, the "<i>Kalila wa Dimna</i>" of the Arabs. A beautiful translation from the <i>Sanskrit</i> of the complete work, in alternate prose and verse, appeared in 1925 by Arthur W. Ryder. The "<i>Panchatantra</i>," or "Five Books," as the book was called by the Hindus, was translated into Arabic by Ibn al-Mukafa' through the Persian early in the tenth century, and has never since lost its popularity with the Arabs.</p>	
THE TAIL OF SAINT GEORGE'S DRAGON . . . . .	155
<p>A folk-tale current in Lebanon.</p>	
THE GOLDEN CITY OF IRAM . . . . .	159
<p>This legend of a lost <i>Eldorado</i> in the heart of the Arabian desert finds reference in the <i>Koran</i>, and is related in the <i>Arabian Nights</i>, nights 276-279, following a classical Arabic version. In the second part of the story the author has made an interpretation of his own of this Arabic legend. For this purpose the name of Uways al-Karani, a pious ascetic contemporary of Mohammed, was substituted for that of the nondescript camel-driver, Abdullah Ibn Kilabah, in the original account, who was the discoverer of Iram, the Pillared City.</p>	



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

xv

PAGE

OUJ, THE SON OF ANAK . . . . .	170
--------------------------------	-----

A current legend which, like so many Moslem legends, is Jewish in origin. Ouj is none other than the *Giant Og* of Biblical and popular Rabbinic Literature, to a description of whose Gargantuan size and exploits the reader is referred to Louis Ginzberg's "*Legends of the Jews*," vol. 3, pp. 343-348.

THE TALE OF ABU KATRINA . . . . .	173
-----------------------------------	-----

A popular folk-tale.

THE PASHA'S ONLY DAUGHTER . . . . .	181
-------------------------------------	-----

Adapted from a tale related to the author by Mr. Azar H. Hanania. This fairy-tale also is found in Dr. Arbeely's collection in manuscript form.

NONE SO STUPID . . . . .	208
--------------------------	-----

A folk-tale of Kalamoon, told by Mr. M. G. Coury, Syrian poet and *littérateur*.

WHAT THE HAMDIYYAH SAID . . . . .	210
-----------------------------------	-----

The Hamdiyyah is an old, popular compilation of *fatwas*, or legal opinions for the benefit of judges not well versed in the intricacies of the Mohammedan canon law.

TWO DUNCES AND A THIRD . . . . .	225
----------------------------------	-----

An old Arabic folk-tale, found in "*al-Mustatraf*" of Shihab-ud-Din al-Abshihi.

THE LESSON OF EXAMPLE . . . . .	227
---------------------------------	-----

A current folk-tale told to the author in his childhood by his father.

THE ADVENTURES OF ALEXANDER THE GREAT, AND HIS SEARCH FOR THE FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH	230
--	-----

The account of the Alexander legend given in this book is based mainly on two separate sources, Tabari's "*Commentary of the Koran*" and the "*History of Alexander*," by Omara, as given in the appendix of Israel Friedlaender's "*Die Chadirlegende und der Alexanderroman*."

	PAGE
THE TERRESTRIAL VISITS OF AL-KHIDR . . . .	248
<p>An old Arabic legend, as reproduced, with little revision, from  <i>"al-Funoon Magazine,"</i> October, 1917.</p>	
ADVENTURES OF ARAB SLAVE-TRADERS . . . .	251
<p>Translated from "<i>The Wonders of India</i>," an Arabic work by          Burzurg Ibn Shahriyar of Ramhurmuz, a sea captain of the          tenth century. The work was edited and translated into French          by L. Marcel Devic. An English translation by Mr. Peter          Quennell in the "Golden Dragon Library" series appeared last          year in London.</p>	

## ILLUSTRATIONS

	FACING PAGE
The King had no doubt now that the young woman was the true bride . . . . .	66
At last he began to murmur, then complain loudly and shout . . . . .	82
“You see I am married to two wives while you are married only to one” . . . . .	96
Clever Hasan stepped down from his horse and kissed the Sultan’s hand . . . . .	126
“My beauty is from Allah, but my red dress is from the dyer” . . . . .	132
Iram the Golden City disappeared as suddenly as it had appeared to him . . . . .	168
Uns-ul-Julous turned her ring to the left, and behold ! a huge black <i>marid</i> suddenly appeared . . . . .	198
At the base of that tree sprang forth a fountain whose water was white as snow . . . . .	242





ARABIAN ROMANCES AND  
FOLK-TALES

of happy villagers. The time was a little before midnight. The savor of the boiling wheat could be traced from afar; and the laughter of the happy idlers could be heard long before their faces, silhouetted on the dark space by the leaping flames, could be distinguished.

There were old men, wrapped in their abas, sitting cross-legged, puffing at their *nargilas* and exchanging reminiscences of years long gone by; there were shy lovers giggling and speaking in whispers; there were village *desperadoes* who came to scorch the corn ears they had stolen from the fields of the town in the pile of live ashes beside the caldron; there were merry, talkative women indulging in the latest town gossips and scandals. Last but not least there were restless little children playing hide and seek at the street corners of the square. The streets themselves were empty but for a few straggling laborers coming from their distant fields outside of the town limits, with their plows, slung to the side of a donkey or mule, rattling noisily on the ground, or homefolks returning from an evening's visit. They seemed to come from nowhere, as they emerged from the dark, narrow streets, moved for a moment across the splash of radiancy that filled the square, and were swal-



lowed again in the oblivion of darkness. An exchange of salutation, a brief stop and a little pleasantries broke their sombre march.

Wheat-boiling time in Kalamoon is a regular festival season, like that of harvesting, winnowing and grape-gathering. It is the last of the autumn festivals and the first of the winter ones; thus it is full of the memories of the former and anticipations of the latter. Each family boils its share of wheat, to last it the year round, at one of those huge caldrons, which each hold from ten to twelve bushels. This boiled wheat is then dried on the flat rooftops, ground with hand querns by the women-folk and sifted into different grades according to the various uses made of it in the Syrian culinary art. *Burgol* is the name given to this boiled, crushed wheat.

That night was lively as usual, but for a small incident. About an hour after midnight, when the streets had become more quiet, and the footsteps of passers-by less frequent, and tired children had begun to steal one by one to bed, a shrill distant voice broke the stillness of the night.

"Listen!" said Hasan, one of a group of young folks gathered around the caldron, "by Allah this is the voice of a *jinni*!"

Some laughed, but Selma, who was a firm believer in *jinn*, confirmed his statement, adding: "I tell you it *is* the voice of a *jinni*. May the *wali* of *Harbusha* (a local saint) strangle me if I had not heard the same voice only last night. I was so scared that I could not go to sleep; and as I lay awake in bed I heard it a second time, and again a third time. After which it stopped, and I heard it no more."

"Ha! Ha! Ha!" laughed Ali, the champion strong man of the town, who had many a time made visits to empty tombs on a bet. "I will escort you home, sweet girl, and see to it that no *jinni* shall come near you."

There was silence for a little while, and then the same shrill voice was heard again, this time more distinctly.

"Now what do you say to that?" cried Selma triumphantly.

"I say it is a *jinni*!" reiterated Hasan.

"Nonsense!" retorted Ali. Then, after a moment's reflection, he turned to Hasan and said: "It seems to me there is something strange and mysterious about this voice. I wish I knew what it is or where it comes from."

Ali said no more, but sank into a contemplative mood, as he perched, his chin between his hands, on

the heap of coarse straw with which a sweating elderly man was feeding the crackling, leaping flames. The fire-feeder, usually a volunteer, fed the fire in intermittent handfuls deftly strewn in even proportions on the bottom-surface of the improvised, circular hearth built a few feet high with adobe wall, and suggesting to God-fearing minds a veritable cavern in *Jehhena*.

Minutes that seemed like hours dragged on in comparative silence. Ali's example put a damper on conversation, and the care-free, blithe youths spoke in subdued whispers.

Suddenly Ali spoke.

"Does any one know from what direction this voice comes?" he asked, awakening from his reverie.

"I think it comes from the direction of the town spring," Selma volunteered, "and what is more, most *jinn* appear from that direction. They frequent the caves in Skufta, on the other side of the spring."

Ali brightened up as if he had found a valuable suggestion in Selma's words, although it was evident from his request immediately after that he was not convinced by her explanation.

"Who will go with me to investigate the source

of this voice?" he asked with a serious determination, adding: "It may be that some one is playing a prank on the townspeople, or it may be that some one is in distress. In either case let us go and find out for ourselves."

A couple of young men volunteered, then others took heart. The word soon went around that Ali and his companions were going on a nocturnal hunt of *jinn*, and before they had gone very far they were followed by a small train of boys and women, who, still believing in their hearts that the voice proceeded from a *jinni* and eager to see how one looked, followed at a close distance now they were so ably escorted.

Merrily, noisily they walked through the main street of Yabrud until they were out of the town limit. The young women and boys, headed nonchalantly by Hasan, huddled closer to Ali's group, as they passed the awesome cemetery, stretching almost to the foot of the perfect sugar-loaf white hill to the left. The night was still, save the gentle gurgling of the stream as it wound its way in the orchards and fields of Yabrud, to the right of the road, or the fluttering of the poplar and willow trees on either side of the stream, or the hooting of a stray owl, or the noisy glee of the adventurous



company, who broke into sudden peals of laughter and as suddenly resumed their pensive mood. The clear sky above was twinkling with myriads of stars, as the Great Dipper was going down to its resting place in the western horizon.

They were now approaching the town spring. They had entered the vast green, which, with two spurs of the mountain inclosing it on either side, formed a natural arena, called by the natives *Kureina*, or "Little Corner." It had often served as a pitching ground for stray gypsies, and could be well adapted for the nocturnal frolicking of *gnomes* and *jinn*. At the base of the right hand spur, a cliff rising into a sheer precipice of some hundred feet, a large spring gushes forth from an underground basin, with smaller ones here and there, all forming a pool of crystalline water that is always icy cold even in the hottest days of July. Suddenly Ali perceived shadows moving in the distance. The shadows were headed in the direction of the spring, and led by one with lantern in hand. The shadows halted, and as Ali and his valiant escorts cautiously drew nearer, the strange figures became somewhat distinguishable. Their long felt turbans and their sheepskin jerkins were faintly outlined by the lantern light.

“Boys!” said Ali, as he halted, and with him the whole group halted, “if my intuition does not betray me, I believe these figures yonder are none other than the Kurds we have seen lately in the market-place of the town. I wonder what mischief they are up to now!”

Only a few days previously the townspeople of Yabrud buzzed with agitated gossip and rumor as a band of uncouth Kurds were seen in the market-place buying vegetables, rice and cooking utensils. They were armed to the teeth with rifles, scimitars and carabeens. With their tall, tapering, felt turbans, their long mustaches and their cartridge belts crossed and recrossed over their bulky, heavily-built chests, they looked ferocious enough. They could not be easily forgotten, even without the help of weird traditions about their sanguinary character, and the heart-rending stories which Armenian refugees spread about, as they went begging for food and shelter from house to house or sold their fanciful wicker articles made of tender willow twigs.

“Who will go with me to find out who these people are, and what they are doing here at this unholy hour of the night?”

The young men all volunteered to go, some tim-

idly, and some with more show of gusto and bravery. But Ali advised that Hasan remain with the women-folk and children. Hasan received this military command with relief. Whether the strange figures were *jinn* or *Kurds* he was not very anxious to encounter them.

As Ali and his volunteers started to move, the young women began to lose nerve.

"Please! Please do not go farther," they pleaded. Some started to cry, while others desperately held to Ali's arms or tugged at his aba, vainly pleading with him to turn back from his mad adventure.

But Ali more than ever insisted on going ahead, now that his suspicions had been aroused. He switched himself loose of his fair captors and shouted to his men to follow. They had not gone very far when they saw the strange figures huddle together, as if to take counsel. Then suddenly they turned and fled in the direction of the dust road by Omar's orchard at the narrowing of the two mountain spurs before they diverge into the natural amphitheatre of Kureina. Ali and his companions followed. Then one of the strangers, the one with the lantern, stopped, turned and fired. Ali, without stopping, drew his gun and fired, and the stranger fell by the road. His friends did not even stop to

pick him up, as they kept on running and firing, while Ali's band were gaining on them. When they came to where the stranger had fallen, they recognized by the light of the lantern, still clenched in his hand, a Kurd. He was already dead, the bullet having hit him in the back and passed through his heart. Some of the men drew the corpse to the road-side, carried the lantern with them and followed the rest, who were still pursuing the fleeing fugitives.

The pursuit did not last long, for the Kurds, coming to where the road forks off in the direction of Bacha, a little village in the mountain fastness northwest of Yabrud, mounted their steeds, which they had left there, and away they galloped as fast as their swift charges could carry them.

And as the Kurds disappeared in the distance, Ali turned to his men and said: "Now, boys, what shall we do?"

Some one suggested that whatever they did they should first go back to the group of women and boys they had left in Hasan's keeping and assure them of their own safety. "Then," he added, "we will deliberate on what next to do together."

The suggestion was acclaimed by all without dissent. They turned and retraced their steps in the direction of Hasan.



"Who goes there?" shouted Hasan, as Ali and his companions were drawing near.

"Friends!" shouted back Ali. "Allah be praised none of us is hurt!"

What a balm of relief did that message bring to the hearts of Hasan and his female coterie. For when they had heard the sound of firing, their anxiety was at a high pitch. Some began to cry and others were dumb with fear and consternation. Nor did the boys, who had followed stealthily at a distance, witness the battle and fled at hearing the first shot, help the situation, for their reports were hazy, conflicting and disconnected. They did not know how many fell. "It may be three or four," they conjectured. Nor did they know for sure on whose side were the casualties.

The joy at the meeting of the two groups may be left to the imagination. The girls gathered around Ali and his heroes, embracing them on all sides. They were all talking and gesticulating at the same time, praising the heroism of Ali and his stanch lieutenants and giving thanks to Allah for their safety.

When the confusion had subsided a little, Ali hushed his friends and said:

"You must not forget what we came out for. We

have not yet pursued the *jinni*, you know! Those accursed Kurds have interrupted our more important search!"

This remark brought some hearty laughter from some, and suppressed titters from others. Faith in such ephemeral beings as *jinn*, *marids* and *gnomes* falters in the face of real fears and real dangers. A brief silence followed, broken by Hasan's voice this time.

"Let us go back," he suggested. "This hunt after *jinn* is beginning to be ridiculous. After all, it was a foolish idea from the start!"

"Ha! Ha!" laughed Ali derisively. "Then in all earnestness you came out to hunt *jinn*. Well, my *sahib*, you are mistaken if you think I came out for the same purpose. You may recall that we heard a shriek way back at the town square, a human shriek, I trow, although some would still insist it was a *jinni's*. Well, I intend to find the source of that voice, especially now, after we had met those infidel Kurds, who have aroused all kinds of suspicions in my breast."

A confusion of opinions followed Ali's defiant speech. Hasan vehemently denounced all that foolish enterprise, and insisted on going back, not for his own sake, he assured, but for that of the women

and children who must not be subjected to any further harrowing experiences! For already, he said, they must be scared nearly to death!

The young men vowed that they would follow Ali wherever he decided to go; and the women-folk refused to go back with Hasan alone. Nor did any one volunteer to accompany him back. Furthermore, the distance from where they were to their intended destination was about one-half of the distance back to Yabrud. The dawn was still far off, and Ali would not part with the lantern. All these facts urged Hasan and his timid friends to follow Ali on his continued journey of adventure.

Every tourist who visits Yabrud goes to see the ancient tombs hewn in the solid rock which abound in the neighborhood of the two main town springs. These springs are separated by a mountain spur, which after forming an indentation like a sharp V merges with another spur going in a northeasterly direction. The best specimens of these tombs are to be found in the environs of the Skufta spring, but a few, not so spacious or well-shaped, may be found at the base of the mountain spur opposite Kureina spring. To these Ali now proceeded, lantern in hand, followed by a few of his brave companions. Ali's plan was to search these caves first, and then,

if he failed to find the object of his search, round the mountain ledge, and facing Yabrud again, continue his search in the cave-tombs of Skufta.

A few minutes of awful suspense, and Ali and his companions were back, reporting that they had found nothing. Then, on Ali's bidding, all continued the march to Skufta.

They went on chattering and laughing as they exchanged anecdotes of Kurds which they had heard. Some one told how a certain mysterious Kurdish peddler had come to Yabrud one winter time, and how one night suddenly he disappeared, and with him the famed mare of Abu Aziz, the swiftest and most graceful Arabian thorough-bred in all Kalamoon. Another related the story of the poor Armenian girl, whose whole family was massacred by the Kurds, and who had travelled on foot all the way from Marash to Yabrud. She was adopted by Um Daoud, the benevolent wife of the Christian shaykh of the town, because she resembled so closely her only daughter, lost in the great cholera epidemic which had swept Kalamoon a few years before.

But foremost in their conversation was the story of the recent abduction of Fatima, the beautiful daughter of Shaykh Naif of Dair-Atiyyah. A vol-

unteer posse from that town, including her father and six brothers, had searched high and low in every nook and corner of Kalamoon. Finding no trace of her, they had given her up for lost and returned home despondent.

The adventurers had now reached Skufta, where a little rivulet emerges from its subterranean course and gently ripples its way among the orchards and fields. The bewitching stillness of the night carried the enchanting murmur of the stream to their ears. It was a message full of mystery, gentleness and pathos, a fitting symbol of the monotonous, simple life of the townspeople of Yabrud. All conversation about Kurds or *jinn* had ceased; indeed everything then seemed so distant and far-removed.

In the midst of that silence Ali suddenly stopped, raising the lantern high above his head with one hand, while with the other he shaded his eyes, straining them to see something in the dark.

"What is it?" asked some, who had gathered around him.

Ali pointed to a strange shadow, moving at the head of the Skufta spring.

But before anybody could form an opinion about the strange object, Selma came forward with her *jinni* theory to explain the new phenomenon.



"Please do not go any farther," she pleaded, "it may be a *jinni*!"

"It is hardly likely," interrupted Ali, still straining to look at the shadow without paying attention to Selma's explanation. "The shadow could not be that of a *jinni* or any human-like being. It looks to me more like a beast." Then to confirm his own conjecture he shouted at the top of his voice: "Who goes there?"

There was no answer, but, instead, the shadow moved in the direction of the town. Ali followed it.

"Please do not go," implored Selma, "*jinn* do sometimes take the shape of animals. If you approach it it may turn you into its own shape, or that of a black stone!"

Ali laughed at the ridiculous idea and walked away. Some followed him, but before the rest could decide whether to go or stay behind, Ali shouted back: "Come on, folks, it is only a horse!"

All took heart at this reassurance, even Selma, who only a minute ago had declared that *jinn* do sometimes take the shapes of animals. After all, Ali was not turned into a beast or stone, or harmed in any way, and *jinn* that do no harm are not to be feared.

The horse trotted away, and then stopped to

graze. Ali and his companions followed it. Clearly the horse was headed in the direction of the notorious caves.

"Boys," said Ali, to the few young men who were around him, "now I begin to see the meaning of the whole thing. This horse is none other than that of the Kurd whom we killed on our way; and if we follow it, it will surely lead us into their den."

They followed the horse and in a few minutes were facing the mysterious caves at the base of the mountain as it curves in its northeasterly course. Those caves are not natural ones formed by the erosion of rain, wind and sun, but human-made caves, nicely hewn in the solid rock. They served as family tombs for some ancient inhabitants of Jambroda, perhaps not further back than the days of the Roman Empire, certainly not later. To one of these, the largest and most awe-inspiring, the horse proceeded.

The entrance to this cave is high and narrow, with a slit in the lintel long and wide enough to allow a slab of wood or stone to serve as a door and protect the tomb from the desecration of animals and the avarice of man. On either side of the entrance are six or seven simple raised tablets with no inscription whatsoever, indicating, perhaps, simply

the number of the inmates of the tomb. The cave itself is divided into a vestibule and the cave proper separated by a low gate. On either side of the vestibule are two empty *sarcophagi*, belonging, perhaps, to the heads of the family, while in the cave proper are a number of smaller *sarcophagi*, lining its three sides. The cave is about twenty feet square, and about seven feet high. The ceiling and part of the walls are covered with soot, and the floor is damp. There is no other opening of the cave beside the narrow outer door, so that even in day time it is hardly possible to see one's way or distinguish objects inside the gate without the help of a match or a lighted candle.

To this cave the horse was finally driven by his pursuers, and there Ali was prepared to enter.

If before, the advance of Ali was impeded at every turn by the protests and pleadings of his timid followers, now, it was threatened to be brought to a halt by their fervid supplications.

Ali, however, shook himself free from the hold of the girls who were trying to keep him from entering the very den of the *jinn*, at midnight or a little after, when the *jinn* exercise their fullest freedom for mischief and for harm.

Of the men, only two volunteered to accompany

Ali, and these stood, pistols in hand, at the outer entrance of the cave.

Ali entered the cave, lantern in hand, as he muttered to himself these words: "In the name of Allah the compassionate, the merciful; there is no power, nor might save in Allah the exalted, the great. We are Allah's and to him is our return."

As Ali entered the inner cave the horse neighed, and a voice from inside cried: "I seek refuge in the Prophet Mohammed and his companions. For the sake of your women-folk do not beat me! I will marry you and go with you to Diarbakr. I am dying of thirst and my wrists are burning with pain. Please release me and do with me whatever you please!"

As Ali heard this broken, heart-rending petition he answered in his usually gruff manly voice: "Fear not, my sister, we have come to save you."

"Praised be Allah and the blessing of God be on his Prophet Mohammed. May Allah reward you here on earth and in Paradise. Who are you, and have my father or brothers sought after me?"

"We are from Yabrud," said Ali, "but we have heard that your father and brothers, with a band of young men from Dair-Attiyyeh, have ransacked every corner of Kalamoon for you, and having

failed to find any trace of you went back to their town disheartened."

Ali was already on his knees beside the young maiden whom the reader must already have identified with Fatima, the daughter of Shaykh Naif of Dair-Attiyyeh. As he lifted the lantern above his head he saw, stretched before him on the floor of the cave, bound hands and feet with leather thongs, a young woman, scarcely twenty, of extreme beauty and comeliness of shape. Her hair, long and black as a raven's wing, was dishevelled, partly covering her bared, marble-white broad breast; her tears trickled down her cheeks from her large, black eyes. They were tears of joy and thanksgiving as well as tears of pain. Half stunned by these charms, which few fairies could surpass, Ali stopped for a second to fill his vision therewith, and then, as if awakened from a dream, he hastily drew out his knife from his pocket and cut the thongs that bound her hands and feet.

The girl could hardly stand, as Ali helped her up. She clasped him around the neck and kissed him repeatedly in utter disregard of propriety and established custom. And as she leaned on his strong body he led her out of the cave with one arm around her waist and with the other holding the lantern.



As Ali came out, the two young men stationed at the outer gate of the cave were utterly confounded. They knew not whether to flee in fear or approach Ali and inspect the mysterious creature who accompanied him. At last, encouraged by the manly laughter of Ali at their timid hesitancy, they came near and learned in short the story of the *jinni* whom Ali succeeded at last in captivating.

The feelings of the little crowd at the bottom of the mountain slope could only be conjectured by the reader. It alternated from painful suspense to fear and anguish and to consternation, as Ali appeared again at the gate of the cave accompanied by Fatima. When they learned of the identity of Fatima, all were happy and relieved, with the exception perhaps of the boys, whose hopes of viewing a *jinni* were now completely shattered.

The walk from the cave back to the village was one joyous procession. The men, to atone for their former timidity and cowardice, rushed to Fatima and Ali and carried them on their shoulders, amid the shouts of joy and victory. The women began to sing and the men joined them. The boys jumped hither and thither or participated in the singing.

While this was going on, a very different scene was being enacted in the town-square from which

Ali and his companions had started. There, around the caldron fire, were still sitting a bunch of old men, the wiseacres of Yabrud. Some were smoking the *nargila* while others were sitting cross-legged, mutely counting their beads. Their uncouth akals, their patched, motley abas, their variegated beards all combined to make an impressive, grotesque picture by the bright light of the caldron pit. Their conversation was, needless to say, on the event of the night; they were discussing in their superior, deliberate manner the fearful subject of *jinn*.

It was the usual old argument whether *jinn* exist, and the usual method of proving or refuting it. So and so was sure *jinn* existed because on a certain evening as he was coming back from his field, he saw a strange figure in the cemetery walking on three legs, and as soon as he said: "In the name of Allah, the compassionate, the merciful," it vanished away in the night; or that another one met a *jinni* near the empty well on the road from Nabk to Yabrud, and as soon as he muttered to himself a certain *sura* of the *Koran* the *jinni* hid back in the well, and so on.

And as there were at least as many men who had not met *jinn* as those who had, such proofs were held invalid or explained away. Each side had a

right to its own opinion and held to it tenaciously.

To all this Abu-l-Khidr was patiently listening, as he puffed on his *nargila*. Abu-l-Khidr or rather al-Hajj Abu-l-Khidr, to introduce him properly, was an old man who had as a pious pilgrim journeyed during his long life no less than five times to *Mecca* and *Medina*. He was, up to the very week in which he fell sick, a constant and early attendant of the mosque prayer on Friday. He never missed a religious celebration, and oft recited whole chapters from the *Koran* by heart at the mawlid (birthday) of the Prophet. He fasted not only *Ramadan*, as was incumbent on every Moslem, but also the other two holy months of *Rajab* and *Shaban*. Al-Hajj Abu-l-Khidr was a venerable and respected figure in Yabrud, not less so than the *khatib*, the religious leader of the Mosque, who was a graduate of the famous Mohammedan university of *Azhar* in Cairo. For Abu-l-Khidr, also, had read quite a little and gathered through the channel of the ear, in his associations with religious celebrities all over the Moslem world, a rich lore of theology and *hadith*. In his pilgrimages to Mecca he had met and listened to many famous Shaykhs from Damascus, Baghdad, and Cairo; from the far cities of Kabul, Kazan and Samarkand.

"May Allah save us from this generation," nodded Abu-l-Khidr, as he drew a few short, vehement puffs at his *nargila* and resumed his silence. This was a signal to those who knew intimately his ways that he was to embark on a long speech; and, forestalling this, one of his friends, Abu Mustafa, the barber, at whose shop many a tangled problem of cosmology and theology was summarily solved, said: "How so, Oh Hajj Abu-l-Khidr? Explain yourself."

"How so, Oh Abu Mustafa? How so?" retorted Abu-l-Khidr as he coiled the long, flexible pipe on his *nargila* and continued: "How otherwise, when people no more remember the words of Allah nor believe therein."

"You argue about *jinn* as if you have never heard their name mentioned in the holy *Koran*, nor ever knew that our Lord and Prophet Mohammed himself, may Allah bless and praise him (here all joined in the ejaculation), believed in them!"

This was a most eloquent and decisive argument which silenced for good those who had a few minutes ago held the whole subject of *jinn* with derision. The triumph of the believers in *jinn* was evident. They had always known that the *jinn* were mentioned in the *Koran*, but as they knew neither

how to read nor write, they pleaded with al-Hajj Abu-l-Khidr to enlighten them on the subject, especially for the benefit of those faithless ones who did not believe in *jinn*! So Abu-l-Khidr began:

“Know, my friends, that *jinn* do verily exist, and they take all sorts of shapes and forms, from that of a flea to that of an elephant. There are different classes of *jinn*, too; some are harmless and others are evil and mischievous. The harmless *jinn* are the faithful ones who heard the *Koran* recited, when it descended from Gabriel on our Prophet, may Allah bless and praise him, and forthwith they believed. As for the harmful *jinn*, they were misled by their evil ones, as we human beings are misled by Satan.”

Here Abu Mustafa interrupted the Hajj to ask about Satan. “Is Satan a *jinn*, Oh Hajj Abu-l-Khidr, or is he not?”

“Some learned theologians,” continued Abu-l-Khidr, “hold that he is not of the race of *jinn*, but the majority of the commentators and fathers hold to the contrary. The story of Satan, as I have read it in ancient books, and as I heard it from many a shaykh in Mecca, is a long one.”

“Tell it to us, Oh Hajj Abu-l-Khidr,” cried half a dozen voices together.



So Abu-l-Khidr cleared his throat, sat upright as he crossed his legs more securely, and said: "Allah, may He be glorified, created the race of *jinn*, from air, long before he created Adam, on him be peace; some say two thousand years before. He sent them prophets from among them to teach them His ways, and establish law and religion among them, but the *jinn* disobeyed their prophets; they multiplied and corrupted the earth, so Allah, may His name be glorified, sent a race of angels who routed them from the earth, driving some to the confines of the far islands and others to the tops of the hills, capturing a numberless host, and killing the rest. Among those captured was *Azazel* or as he was later called, *Iblis* or Satan. *Azazel* was a little child when taken by the angels and so he was brought up among them on earth. When he grew up he became their chief and leader, and when time was fulfilled and Allah, praised be He in His kingdom, wished to create Adam, He gathered the angels and informed them of His Holy purpose, as we are told in the *Koran*, saying: 'I shall place on earth a vicegerent beside you, and shall raise you to Heaven.' The angels, may their name be blessed, murmured at this, saying: 'Shall You place on it (earth) those who shall corrupt it and shed blood

therein, as did before them the race of *jinn*, while we praise Thee and sanctify Thy name?" And Allah, may He be exalted, said: 'I know what ye know not.' Then, when Allah, may He be praised, created Adam, He commanded the angels to fall prostrate before him. All did, but *Azazel*, who refused saying: 'Why shall I bow to him, when you created me from smokeless fire and him from earth? I am superior to him.' For this offense *Iblis* was hurled from the height of his position to his present abode in hell, from where he has since waged a relentless war on the race of man.

"Now the enmity between the *jinn* and the human beings dates from that incident. When Abel was murdered by his brother Cain, it was the *jinn* who taught Cain how to commit the foul deed. The feud between the *jinn* and the descendants of Adam continued till the time of the prophet Enoch who reconciled them. But hardly had Enoch disappeared before the old enmity was revived, and so it was in all the intervals between one prophet and another, until the time of Solomon, to whom Allah, may His name be glorified, subjected the race of *jinn*. It was the *jinn* who built the Temple to Our Lord Solomon, who carried His army from place to place on the magic carpet; who fashioned

the brass and gold utensils for the temple and the royal palace and who attended at his every command. Tadmor, also, the great city of our lady Zaineb, the queen of the desert, was built by the *jinn*.

“Our lord Solomon controlled the *jinn* by incantations and the recitations of certain formulas which Allah the Almighty communicated to him. All these things he gathered in a book which was discovered in his treasury long after his death. The *jinn* trembled before our lord Solomon for he punished them when they disobeyed his orders, imprisoning some in bottles, which he sealed and threw to the bottom of the ocean, while others he bound and threw in old wells and dungeons. Some authorities divide the *jinn* into three classes: winged ones who fly through the air; those who resemble dogs and snakes and a third who are nomads, like our Arab *bedwins*. Others record a war which actually took place between the *jinn* and a tribe of Arabs call Ayatilah, who were since known as ‘the *jinn* killers. . . .’”

Al-Hajj Abu-l-Khidr was going to say more on the subject of *jinn* when the distant ululation of women and the joyful commotion in the square around the absorbed group of old men interrupted him and told of the triumphant return of Ali. It

was only a few minutes before the story of Ali's adventure spread to every one still awake on that memorable night in Yabrud.

On the next day Fatima was led in a gala procession to her father's home in Dair-Atiyyeh. An old woman shouted at the top of her voice: "By Allah, there is no couple in Kalamoon more fit to belong to each other than this couple." This oracle was acclaimed with wild cheers from all sides. The procession reached the house of Shaykh Naif, who came out with his sons to meet it. The first thing he did was to call the khatib of Dair-Atiyyeh and marry the couple on the spot. The wedding merri-ment lasted three days, after which Ali returned to Yabrud with his fair bride to live with her happy ever after.

. . . . .

Now, whether the outcome of Ali's nocturnal ad-venture helped in any sense to settle the question of the *jinn*, in the face of Koranic evidence, is very debatable. But long after the happy marriage of Ali to Fatima the doubt was still expressed in many an outlying hamlet and village in Kalamoon, whether Fatima was after all a substantial human being and not an enchanting *jinni*, who had fallen in love with Ali and contrived this plot to win him!

THE HISTORY OF THE  
CITY OF BOSTON

FROM THE FIRST SETTLEMENT  
TO THE PRESENT TIME  
BY  
JOSEPH NEALE  
OF THE BOSTON BAR  
IN TWO VOLUMES  
VOL. I.  
BOSTON  
PUBLISHED BY  
JOSEPH NEALE  
AT THE SIGN OF THE SHIELD  
IN THE CITY OF BOSTON  
1845



THE FIRST OF SEPTEMBER 1872

My dear Mother, I have just received your letter of the 28th and am glad to hear from you. I am well and hope these few lines will find you the same. I have been thinking much of late about the future and the many changes that are coming upon the world. I feel that we must be prepared for whatever may come and that the only way to do this is by being true to our principles and to each other. I hope you will agree with me in this. I am, my dear Mother, ever your affectionate son, John Smith.

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ning with an ugly smile: "I will give you one. From now on you shall be called Nazilah," which in Arabic means a guest or sojourner.

The child trembled and turned white with fear as the old woman held tight to her arm and began to drag her in the direction of the tents that could be seen in the distance. Jamilah cried as loud as she could: "Mother, mother help me!" Her tears were flowing on her cheeks, but her mother could not hear her, for the hill hid the village from her, and the distance, more than a mile away, was too far for her little voice to be heard.

The *bedwin* woman spoke kindly to Jamilah at first. "Come along with me, my daughter," she urged. "Come along and I will take you to my nice tent, where we have fresh goats' milk for you to drink every morning and lots and lots of dates. You also may play with the little spotted lambs and kids around the tent."

But the little girl kicked and dug her feet in, resisting all efforts of the old woman to drag her, as she cried frantically: "I want to go back to my mother! I want to go home! Please, kind old woman, leave off my arm and let me go!"

"Oh no, you shall not go back home!" insisted the old woman. "I will be your mother from now

on and I have eight sons at home, your new brothers, who will be delighted when they see what a pretty little sister I stole for them from the village!"

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On hearing this, little Jamilah was filled with a secret terror and dismay and cried more bitterly than ever. But the *bedwin* woman was eager to reach her tent before any one should appear by chance in that lonesome spot. So, dragging the child forcibly, she gave her a nudge in the back and made her run as fast as she did herself. With many a pinch and blow, threatening her with the vilest of language and oaths, the old woman hurried on with little Jamilah till they reached the miserable tent dwellings. The eight sons of the *bedwin* woman all came out and surrounded the trembling child, viewing her with amused interest. Significant looks were exchanged between the mother and her sons, followed by hushed whispers. A stir of commotion ran from tent to tent, and suddenly the gypsies began to take down their tents and load them on the donkeys. In another hour they had moved, with little Jamilah, from henceforth to be known as Nazilah, riding with them.

It was in vain that Jamilah's people back at the village looked for her. When the time for her to

return home had passed, her mother became frantic with worry and called on neighbors to go out with her to search for her daughter. They looked everywhere in the wood and called out for her, but there was no answer, except the echoes of their shouts. At last they found the bundle of wood and their worst fears were realized. They knew that the girl had been kidnaped. But where were they to look for her and who of the men was going to risk his life for a mere stripling of a girl? A few volunteers on horseback rode in different directions and when night set in they returned to Jamilah's mother with only words of consolation. The mother was heart-broken with grief and the shock was so great to the sick father that it hastened his passing away.

Many years passed by and Nazilah became a regular *bedwin* young woman, in outward appearances at least. She was dressed up like one of them and had a *bedwin* accent to her talk. She was forced to marry one of the sons of the old woman who kidnaped her, although she disliked him and feared him very much, for he was of a deceitful nature which fitted well with his fierce, ugly looks. Often he would beat her on the slightest provocation, for all she tried to please him in different ways. When alone, she would cry long hours, thinking of her

family. She longed to go back to them. She wished, oh how she wished! to have a look at her old home, to run up and throw herself into her mother's open arms. But, long was the distance between them, dark was the future and hopeless seemed the prospect of her deliverance.

Nazilah soon learned the task of packing and unpacking; the lone weary journeys in the sunny desert became familiar to her. The continuous change and unsettled life held the only ray of hope to her crushed, sad, youthful heart. She was watched very closely and when camping near a village, she was not allowed to go round into the houses as other *bedwin* women did, for fear she might run away.

One year, late in the fall, the *bedwins* planned to move toward Tadmur, Palamyra, the ruins of the ancient capital of Queen Zenobia, where they were sure of plenty of pasture for their cattle. By that time, Nazilah had a little baby boy, whom she carried in a bag strapped to her back the way all *bedwin* mothers did.

One morning a man from Nazilah's own home town, who had a big vineyard, loaded his donkey with the best varieties of grapes he had and set off very early for Damascus, where he expected to



command a high price for his stock. He knew that it would take him long hours to reach that city, but the thought of the money he was going to realize cheered him up and buoyed his steps as he trudged wearily behind his loaded donkey.

As he left the village, there lay before him two ways, branching out into two different directions, one of them leading to Damascus, and the other, a narrow path that winds up a plateau, leading into the wilderness where shepherds usually take their flocks to graze. The man was occupied with his thoughts, counting his chickens before they were hatched, making his account of how many piasters he would have after selling all his grapes. The donkey led the way, and being more used to the narrow path than to the Damascus way, trotted along toward the wilderness, with his master absently following behind. After three hours of travel, the man all of a sudden found himself facing the wrong direction. He was quite mad at himself and at the donkey, to which he administered hard blows for the mistake which he blamed on the dumb creature. The dream of riches quickly vanished. With anger and disappointment he stood still for a while. He could not go back and take the right way to Damascus, for it was getting too late for that day. Yet he must

sell the grapes or else they would spoil. He looked around and saw some tents from afar. The *bedwins* have little use for money and do their trading mostly by bartering. The man thought he would save his grapes by bartering them to the *bedwins* for cheese, butter or milk. He held the halter of the donkey and walked toward the *bedwins* with his donkey snuffing and hanging its head as though it felt it had been unfairly whipped. It did not take them long before they reached the *bedwins'* temporary colony. Going among the tents, the man began to sing out the rhymes he had extemporized to fit the hearers and the occasion:

“Grapes, grapes, who’ll buy grapes?”

Sweet as honey, soft as silk,  
I will sell my grapes for milk.

Ladies’ fingers, girls’ delight,  
They will make you strong to fight.

Grapes, grapes, who’ll buy grapes?”

The *bedwins* hardly understood a word of what he sang because of his different accent, but on hearing his nice voice, and seeing the grapes he had, they ran up to him to buy in their usual manner of barter. But as good fortune would have it, the *bedwins* whom the grape-seller hit that day were

the same ones who had kidnaped Nazilah. She heard him too, and for the first time in many long years heard again the familiar words and accent of her people and felt as though the voice was a heavenly message from Allah sent for her relief. Hope, by which her heart hung like a weak thread, was suddenly doubled and tripled. The rays of sunshine broke through the gloom of her sad soul.

But she did not run out to him for help, as you may imagine, for she knew that if the *bedwins* became suspicious of the least communication between her and the man, they might follow him after he left their camp and kill him. Then the next thing they would do would be to move away with her.

She was indeed a clever young woman, as you will readily see for yourself. The *bedwins* were used to her singing lullabies to her baby in her own words and accent, when she put him to sleep. There was nothing unusual to them when she began to sing her story out, with the hope that the grape-seller might hear it and find a way to deliver her and take her back to her family. She waited until the man got right in front of her tent where she was putting her baby to sleep, and started to sing with a sweet, melodious voice her improvised song:

“Sleep my baby, sleep my baby,  
Sleep my *bedwin* baby, sleep.  
God is kind, oh God is gracious,  
He will always watch and keep.

I have travelled with *bedwins*,  
In the desert many years.  
Hope has been my only comfort,  
And my only friends were tears.

I went out one early morning,  
To the field around the hill,  
Where a cruel *bedwin* caught me  
By the arm against my will.

Then she dragged me fast and told me,  
‘You are now a child of mine,  
I have eight big, husky children,  
You will be, then, number nine.’

How I wept and cried for freedom,  
But nobody heard my cry.  
Sleep my baby, sleep my baby,  
Sleep my *bedwin* baby bye.”

The grape-seller at once remembered the story of little Jamilah who was kidnaped. Her sweet voice aroused his compassion very deeply. But to make sure that he was not mistaken as to who she was, he directed a question to her in the same manner she was doing. To Jamilah's delight at her success, she heard the man call out:

“Grapes, grapes, who’ll buy grapes?

I will sell my grapes for cheese,  
Give me some more information, if you please.

Grapes, grapes, who’ll buy grapes!”

As he sang he was automatically handing the grapes to the *bedwins*, taking whatever they brought of their dairy products for exchange. His thoughts were occupied with the story he had just heard and how he could help the girl reach her family.

On hearing what the grape-seller sang, Nazilah was sure that he understood her story, and with a voice trembling with joy at the prospect of her final redemption, she sang again, in answer to the grape-seller:

“Our home is beyond a church house,  
And our neighbor is a priest,  
I was stolen Friday morning,  
Just two days before the feast.

Oh grape-seller, kind grape-seller,  
Show my people where I stay,  
Come before the winter settles,  
Come before we move away.

God is good, and God is gracious,  
He alone has heard my cry,  
Sleep my baby, sleep my baby,  
Sleep my *bedwin* baby bye.”



When all the grapes were sold, the man traveled back to his village, after he managed somehow to tell Nazilah where to meet him the next morning.

On seeing all the cheese and butter he handed her when he arrived, the grape-seller's wife railed at him, saying: "I see, you did not go to Damascus! What made you change your plan and go to the *bedwins* instead?"

The man was not in the mood to talk of his trip and after a long silence said: "It was a mistake of my donkey, a very wonderful and useful one, too!" The donkey was not near enough to hear the compliment made by his master on his behalf. It would have made up for the whipping it received that day.

The grape-seller did not say anything of his discovery of the young girl to anybody when he was back again from his trip for fear he might not succeed as he hoped, in bringing her back.

He realized the risk he was taking upon himself in kidnaping the girl from the *bedwins*, but the sad tone in the song he had heard that day gave him a restless feeling, and he could not resist doing the best he could for her, even when it entailed danger to his own life.

After supper, the man went to his neighbor and asked him for his horse to go on an urgent errand the next morning.

Very early the next day the grape-seller was on his way to the desert where he had been the day before. He did not approach the tents nor did he even intend to let any one see him if possible.

Nazilah arranged that morning to go out and gather wood as she always did whenever they were in need of it. The *bedwins* had no objection to her going anywhere while they camped out so far in the desert. Softly and gently she picked up her baby, who was sound asleep in his crib, for she could not think of leaving him behind.

Nazilah, with her baby strapped to her back, went to the appointed place and waited there for about half an hour, which seemed to her like ages. What if the grape-seller did not show up, or some one of her *bedwin* folks should discover her tryst with him? But the grape-seller did not fail her. He came, and with no delay he lifted Jamilah up, placing her behind him in the saddle. Then he threw a big garment over her to hide her as much as possible and sped away as fast as his steed could gallop. He did not stop until they were within the fields of the village. He left her outside, near the hill from where once she was stolen, and went to her mother and told her there was a guest coming to stay with them at their house, if she would go out with him to meet her near the hill.

Dressed up in *bedwin* clothes, Jamilah was waiting anxiously for her mother. When she came in sight Jamilah ran quickly to meet her. The mother at first did not recognize her long-lost daughter, and when she did she was overcome by the unexpected joy.

The news of Jamilah's return spread like wild-fire in the village, and every one, old and young, came to see her and rejoice with her mother. It was like a community festival in the village.

Now, the man who risked his life to save Jamilah had a son, and he was given in marriage to Jamilah, for they were old playmates and always were interested in each other. And thus Jamilah's prayers and bitter tears were answered at last. And later, when Jamilah's children grew up, she never allowed them to go to the woods, nor ever sent them there to gather fagots for the fire!

## THE ART OF QUESTIONING

**I**N Jarood, a little town on the edge of the Syrian Desert, there lived a certain wealthy *emir*. One day two young boys came to him to ask for work as coffee bearers at his *manzool*, or guests' mansion. As the *emir* needed only one of them, he thought of giving both a trial, then choosing the one who would give him the better satisfaction.

The *emir's* house was built on a hill. From his porch he could see a vast expanse of the desert, and the caravans that passed with their loaded camels on the road that leads from Damascus to Homs.

The *emir* was enjoying his afternoon coffee on the veranda which was furnished with expensive Persian rugs and Damascene carved wood *divans*, inlaid with mother-of-pearl, when he saw a caravan at a distance coming up in his direction very slowly. Suddenly an idea flashed upon him.

"Here is a chance to test the two boys," he thought. He clapped his hands and the doorkeeper came in, bowed before his master and said: "What is your highness' command?"

"Send in Ajaj, one of the two boys who came this morning," said the *emir*.

The doorkeeper bowed himself out, and in a few moments Ajaj stood politely before the *emir*, who told him that he was going to send him on an errand.

“Take my horse from the stable and go speeding on the Homs road and ask yonder travelers where they came from, where they are going, what they have loaded on their camels, and where they are going to sell it.”

The young lad bowed, saying: “At your command, my lord,” and went out.

In a few minutes Ajaj was on his way speeding toward the caravan. He was a rather thoughtless, impulsive lad. As he drew near to the caravan he never thought of slowing up his horse. It is well known among the natives of that section of Syria how easily camels are frightened. When Ajaj came in sight, speeding and raising a cloud of dust behind him, the camels shied backwards in terror. Some of them ran off the road and the whole caravan was in an uproar and confusion. The travelers were very angry with the horse-rider. They had to do their best to control their animals and line them up on the right road again. Ajaj stopped his horse at last and said with a loud commanding voice: “Hello, there!”



Only one out of the caravan returned his greeting.

"Where did you come from?" he asked.

The leader of the caravan looked at him, then at the fine, graceful horse he was riding and said: "None of your business."

"But, I must know where you came from, where you are going and what your camels are carrying," insisted Ajaj. "These are the orders of my lord, the *emir*."

"You shall know nothing of the sort, young man, orders or no orders. Go your way and leave us alone. Allah has bestowed upon us a peaceful journey. Do not disturb our peace more than you already have done," retorted the leader curtly.

Ajaj urged them to answer his questions, but he failed to get any information as the travelers kept up their slow pace. Finally he turned the horse to go back. But before leaving them he said: "I shall tell my master that the people he sent me to were unworthy to trade in his province."

"Tell him also," shouted the leader, "that even the intelligent, fine-looking horse felt disgraced at the tactless, unworthy rider his highness provided for him."

Ajaj galloped back and presented himself before

the *emir* after he had taken the horse to the stable.

"Well," said the *emir*, "did you get the information I sent you for?"

"My lord," answered Ajaj, "those churlish muleteers are like all travelers on roads. They deal with animals all day long and thus become dumb like animals themselves. They did not answer any of my questions!"

"Did they say nothing to you at all?" asked the *emir*.

"Their leader was rude enough to tell me that your highness has disgraced your horse by providing an unworthy rider for it," Ajaj answered.

"Very well, my boy," said the *emir*, "go in peace to your home. If the leader of the caravan, whom you thought as dumb as an animal, marked you down as an unworthy rider of my horse, my every day guests may not think of you any better."

When Ajaj had gone, the *emir* clapped his hands and called for the other boy.

"Send Kareem in," commanded the *emir*. The caravan could still be seen from the porch, slowly approaching on the road to Homs.

Kareem appeared and bowed before the *emir*, and in a few minutes was on his way with the same message Ajaj had carried to the caravan, and on

the same horse. When he got to the right road, he stood for awhile and made plans to meet those people without frightening their animals. To do that he had to detour through the desert until he got behind them. Then he turned to the right road and followed them carefully and slowly.

"Peace be upon you, brethren," gently greeted Kareem, when he was right close by them. The men turned around and, to his gentle greeting, they all responded, saying: "And the peace of Allah and His blessings be upon you, too."

Kareem did not detain them nor stand in their way, as Ajaj had tried to do; but, instead, joined them by driving his horse slowly to keep pace with them.

"You must have had a long journey, brethren, for you all look very tired," he said to them.

The leader looked at him, then at the horse, which they all recognized as soon as they saw it. "Yes, my lad," he said, "we left Darayya early before sunrise this morning."

"I hope you will get the reward of your labor by selling your goods at a good price," said Kareem.

"Thank you, my lad," the leader answered. "We have the best kind of grapes and watermelon, and expect to sell them at the first chance we have."

“Do you intend to rest this night at our town?” asked Kareem.

“No, my lad,” said the leader, “we expect to get into the next village before sunset, Allah willing.”

Then turning his horse around to go back from whence he came, Kareem saluted the men and said: “I wish you prosperity and safety.” They returned his salutation, then the leader, turning back, added: “Tell his highness, your master, that we were glad at the first time to see his fine horse, and at the second to meet the worthy rider thereof.”

Kareem did not understand what they meant as he did not know that his friend had come before him to see them.

In delivering the message the *emir* was well pleased with him, and hired him on the spot as his coffee-bearer.

## AFTER DISTRESS—RELIEF

ONCE upon a time there lived two sisters, one very rich and the other very poor. The rich sister, Khadijah, was as cross, as mean and as grasping as she was rich. As for pity and kindness, her heart was as devoid of them as though it were made of flint. But her sister, Fatima, in spite of her poverty, was always cheerful, sweet-natured and patient under all circumstances. Now the rich sister had one child, an only daughter, deformed and ugly from birth, whom she called Zarifa, while the poor sister had seven children, making altogether with her husband a family of nine.

From dawn to dusk, Fatima's husband worked as a common, hired laborer for a few copper coins a day, while she herself, putting her children in the care of kindly neighbors, went every day to her sister's home to do the housework for her—to clean, to launder, to knead the dough and to do other chores. For all this, her sister gave her two loaves of bread and a bowl of stale meats and cooked food.

Thus the two sisters lived year in and year out, as if they were total strangers in this world. Not



once did Khadijah inquire of her sister's children, or offer to assist her by adopting one of them, or even sending them presents on the several holidays during each year. And when Fatima would inquire of her sister's only daughter, her sister would reply churlishly that she should mind her own business and not mock other people's misfortunes.

One day, Fatima, the poor sister, felt that soon she would give birth to another child. At the end of her day's labor she begged her sister to give her two copper coins with which to go to the public bath, telling her that it was very necessary for her to do so, and added that it might be necessary for her to absent herself a few days.

After listening impatiently to her sister, Khadijah haughtily replied:

"You may either take the money or the food, but to ask for both is outrageous greed. As for your absenting yourself, that is your own affair, but I shall be obliged to hire another woman, for the housework must go on, you know!"

At this answer, tears came to the eyes of the unhappy Fatima. She thought of her poor, hungry children who would have to go without food if she did not bring them any from her sister's; she thought of her husband, who had not been fortu-

nate lately in finding work; she thought of her own state, and how soon she would have another soul to care for, another mouth to feed. But forgetting her own comfort, and thinking only of the comfort of her beloved ones at home, she wiped her tears, took the bowl of food and went home.

That evening, after supper, Fatima told her husband that she must go to a public bath, relating what had passed between her and her sister.

“Never mind, my dear,” the husband comforted, “Allah in his mercy will provide a way. Tomorrow go not to your sister, but proceed straightforth to a public bath, and I will redouble my efforts to make some extra money and will come to the bath and pay your fare.”

And so on the next morning Fatima took a change of clothing and her few bath accessories, and went to a public bath.

When she finished her bath, her husband had not appeared to redeem her. She waited and waited until it grew dark, and she began to worry for her children and husband. At last, noticing a rich woman going out of the bath with her retinue of maids, she stole herself among them, pretending she was one of the maids. But the bath-keeper, a stern, shrewd woman, noticed the embarrassed expression

on her face and stopped her, asking for the bath fare.

“I came with that rich lady as one of her maids,” spoke Fatima nervously, hoping that the rich woman would take pity on her and pay her fare among the rest. But the rich woman, hearing the remark, turned back and denied that the woman was one of her maids. Then Fatima broke down in tears and told her story, adding that she was expecting her husband any moment to come and pay her fare.

“This is none of my worries,” snapped the bath-keeper, savagely. “You shall not leave this bath until you pay your fare.”

The poor woman went back in tears and sat in a booth in the outer chamber, where people dress up, till it was time for the bath to close. Then the bath-keeper roared out to her that she was going to put out the lights and bolt the doors on her until the next morning. And so she did, and Fatima was left alone, trembling with fear and anguish in the dark. And as it grew cold Fatima took her clothes off once more and went to the steam chamber, where she sat near one of the stone basins to warm herself.

Now the heat of the room added to her fear and

nervousness. She cuddled up and lay her weary head on the edge of the basin, and called on Allah and all the walis she could think of to help her pass the ordeal in safety, and bring her husband to her in time.

She was thus praying when lo and behold! The four walls of the bath chamber were cleft asunder, and suddenly there appeared four beautiful fairies, whose radiance filled the dark place with light. At the same time a couch with soft, feathery bed and pillows was planted in the midst of the chamber. Gently the fairies advanced and carried the poor woman to the couch.

Still dazed, and wondering in her mind whether she was in a dream or in a waking state, a baby girl was born to Fatima. She was so beautiful, praise be to the Creator, that she could be taken for a *houri* child brought down in a bundle from Paradise.

And when Fatima had been tucked comfortably in bed and made to feel at ease, and her baby, wrapped in silk and woollen swaddling clothes, placed in her arms, one of the fairies turned to the others and said:

“It is now near day-break and we must depart. Let us offer our gifts to the infant child before we go.”

Then the first one advanced and touching the head of the infant lying in her mother's bosom, said:

“Ere I disappear and pass into thin air,  
I grant you my beauty and long, lovely hair.”

And the second one advanced and passing her hand over the child's soft, velvety face and golden locks, said:

“A gold and a silver coin may drop from each cheek,  
Whenever with water to wash them you seek;  
Instead of dandruff and lice from your head,  
May corals and pearls, when you comb it, be shed.”

And the third one came forward, and, giving the little child a hug, said:

“May jasmine and roses from your right side fall  
As you walk; orchids and lilies from your left withal.”

Then the fourth fairy advanced and, blessing the baby and kissing her half-oped blue eyes, said:

“I will grant you, my dear child, that it will cloud and rain  
When you cry and when you smile it will shine again.”

When the last fairy had spoken she waved her hand and disappeared with her three companions as they had come. And as suddenly the walls closed back.

Fatima rubbed her eyes as if awakening from a



dream. Perhaps it *was* a dream after all. But there lay the baby in its rich swaddling clothes, nestling in her arms; there the couch in which they slept. Eagerly the mother took a little water in her hands and washed her child's face, and sure enough a golden and a silver coin dropped each from a cheek. She combed her baby's hair, and behold! pearls and corals actually dropped from the baby's head to the floor of the bath chamber. Fatima picked them up, half-stunned with joy and amazement.

Then, huddling the baby to her breast, Fatima rose and went to the dressing chamber and put on her clothes.

By this time the dawn had broken and shortly afterward the bath-keeper appeared. Poor Fatima, no longer poor, stepped forth and handed the bath-keeper a silver coin. When the bath-keeper saw the silver coin her eyes bulged out with surprise. She could not believe that the woman who handed it to her was the same one who had to stay over-night in the bath because she could not pay two measly copper coins. When she recovered from her surprise, the bath-keeper smiled, as she meekly rubbed her hands together and said:

"My honey child, my lambkin, why didn't you ask me to stay with you over-night and keep you

company? Poor woman, you must have been frightened to death alone at night in this dark building, with its many chambers.”

But Fatima assured her that her generous offer was appreciated, but hardly necessary, and so went out to the streets.

And whom should she meet as she came out of the bath but her own husband, running about like a wild man and shouting: “Oh, mother of my children, where are you? Oh, my precious wife, where have you gone?”

Fatima called him to her and he ran with joy and hugged her.

“You forgot to tell me to which bath you were going,” he ejaculated, “but praise be to Allah and his Prophet that you are safe! Last night the children had to go without supper that I might bring you your bath-fare. How then did you come out?”

His wife smiled and, partly baring the baby for him to see, said:

“Thank Allah who after distress has brought us relief. Our worries are all over.”

Then she related to him what had happened, and how the fairies had visited her and granted the infant child four miraculous gifts. Then producing a golden coin from her pocket she handed it to him,

telling him to hasten with it and buy food sufficient for the whole family. Fatima's husband looked at the coin, then at his wife, stupefied, for never had he seen a golden coin before. He closed his hand on the coin and ran to the nearest market-place.

There was great joy that evening at the home of the erstwhile destitute family, and the children ate with a savage appetite; for never had they seen so much food and so many varieties of it before. And it was decided that day, in commemoration of their miraculous source of sudden wealth, to call the new-born child the *Miracle Girl*.

A year passed before Khadija, Fatima's rich sister, missed her, for the two sisters lived at the extreme parts of the city, and till then Khadijah had not heard of the great good fortune which fell to her sister.

"I wonder what has become of my sister," she said to herself one day. "It is a long time since she has shown her face at my place."

Then, calling one of her slaves, she ordered him to go to the butchers' market and buy a sheep's head and entrails and carry them in a basket to her sister's home, adding: "Find out for me how fate has dealt with her, and whether she is still alive or not."

The slave bowed stiffly and walked away to carry his mistress's order.

When he came to where Fatima and her family had lived, he found a magnificent palace, worthy of a vizier, or even a king. He asked where the destitute folks who used to live there in a humble cottage had moved to, and what that palace was which occupied its place.

The neighbors laughed at his ignorance, saying: "Have you not heard about the sudden wealth that has come to this family?"

When they were asked how this sudden wealth had come about, the neighbors shrugged their shoulders, for Fatima's family had kept that a secret among themselves, but they conjectured that the family must have hit upon a hidden treasure.

The slave was now ashamed to bring in the contemptible present which his mistress had sent with him, and, announcing himself to the watchman at the gate of the palace, where he left his basket, he entered.

As Fatima's eyes fell on the slave, she recognized him and welcomed him before he had even a chance to speak.

"Welcome, Oh messenger of good. How are my sister and her family, and why does she not come to see me?"

The slave gave some lame excuse on behalf of his mistress and after a brief stay, when he was ready to depart, Fatima brought a handful of corals and pearls and pressed them into his hand, saying:

“This is a present to you for the good news that you have brought me about my sister and your reassurance of her continued prosperity and good health.”

The slave's eyes fairly popped with envy and astonishment as he gazed at the precious stones. He bowed low and, with an ingratiating smile, thanked his mistress' sister profusely, meekly apologizing on his own behalf and that of his mistress for their past rude behavior to her. But Fatima, smiling, raised her hand in a gesture which meant to indicate that no apologies were needed, and said:

“Let bygones be bygones. Bring not the past before me, and when you go back, tell my sister that I have forgiven her and forgotten all the evil and malice that she had shown me, and that I want her to come with her daughter and live with me, that we may be together the rest of our lives.”

The slave went back and told his mistress of the wonders he had beheld, and showed her the corals and pearls he had brought with him from her sister.

At their sight Khadijah turned green with envy,



but affected to be happy at her sister's sudden good fortune.

Khadijah lost no time. Early next morning she took her daughter and went to visit her sister, who welcomed them with open arms and insisted that they remain and live with her. Khadijah accepted the invitation, but her heart was ready to burst with envy.

Thus the two sisters lived together, as Khadijah with her husband and daughter moved to the palatial dwelling of Fatima. No more was Khadijah haughty and domineering over her sister; no more did she look down upon her with contempt, hardly deigning to speak to her except in a tone of command or reprimand. On the contrary, she would go out of her way now to please her sister, helping her in the work about the house, and running to relieve her of any task that Fatima chanced to pick up. Especially was Khadijah keen on looking after her little niece, the Miracle Girl, of whom she took such tender care, washing her and combing her hair whenever her mother was not looking. In truth, however, she no more loved the Miracle Girl than she did her mother, but hated them both at heart with an intense hatred, born of blind, deep envy. What she loved was the gold, corals and pearls

which she was secretly hoarding, as she washed and combed her niece.

And in years, the Miracle Girl grew to be a beautiful young woman, and her fame spread over the whole world.

So great, indeed, was her fame, that many a prince and gallant knight had sought her hand in vain. But one day the heir to the throne of India, hearing of her wonderful beauty and miraculous qualities, sent emissaries to ask for her hand in marriage in his behalf.

When the parents of the Miracle Girl heard of this they were very happy. What better match could they think of for their daughter? And now that they had become immensely wealthy through their daughter's miraculous qualities, they began to aspire for social honor and prestige without which wealth is not complete.

But when the emissaries of the Prince of India came and announced the intentions of their master with eloquent words and many royal gifts of ivory, gold cloth, magnificent jewels and rare perfumes, the mother was at a loss whether to accompany her daughter to India or stay with her children at home. Seeing this, Khadijah, who was now consumed with jealousy at this new stroke of fortune to her niece and sister, realized what a great opportunity it was

for her to get even. She came forward and spoke to her sister in her gentlest manner, saying:

“Dearest sister, why trouble yourself to go all the way to India? What is a sister for, if not for such occasions? Let *me* go in your stead, and I will take care of your daughter as if she were my own.” Fatima was pleased with the plan and gave her consent. So it was arranged that the Miracle Girl would go in the custody of her aunt. Along with them went the aunt’s deformed daughter and the Miracle Girl’s eldest brother.

They all went in the same ship which had brought the royal emissaries, but the bride-to-be and her people were given separate quarters, the best on the ship, next to the captain’s cabin.

But the ship had scarcely lifted anchor, when the envious Khadijah began to execute her nefarious plan of revenge. She went to the captain and bribed him and the sailors, with some of the corals and pearls she had hoarded, asking them to close their eyes on what she was going to do, and not to interfere with her whatsoever. And the captain and his sailors agreed. Then Khadijah put her niece in a little narrow cell and her nephew in another. She gave the boy a little food at a time to keep him alive, but to the girl she gave none, until she had almost fainted with hunger.

“Is this the way to treat your niece?” pleaded the Miracle Girl. “Is this the reward of hospitality and kindness? What have I done to merit this treatment at your hands—you who have shown me all endearment and love since I was a babe in the cradle? Please, dear aunt, give me something to eat, for I am dying of hunger.”

“Aha!” retorted the aunt with triumphant glee. “You will marry the king’s son, will you! And you really think I have loved you all these years, when I have hated you like the shadow of Iblees himself! Poor misguided creature! Verily I will give you naught to eat till you let me pluck out your right eye.”

The poor girl had to consent, for life was dearer to her than her right eye, and it was better for her to be one-eyed than die of hunger. So the cruel aunt plucked the right eye of the Miracle Girl and put it in a jewelry box, wrapping it carefully in a piece of cotton.

A few days later, the Miracle Girl again became so hungry that she had to give her other eye for a piece of bread and some water. And now the Miracle Girl was totally blind, while the cruel aunt had the freshly-plucked eye wrapped and kept in the same box with the other one.



The King had no doubt now that the young woman was the true bride.





By this time the ship had reached the shores of India, whereon the wicked Khadijah gave orders that her niece be secretly thrown overboard. But the sailors took pity on the unfortunate girl and laid her on the edge of a swampy place, not far from the shore. In the meantime Khadijah, hiding the face of her daughter Zarifa under a heavy veil, passed her for the genuine Miracle Girl. The emissaries knew nothing of what had happened, for it was not considered proper for men to peer into women's affairs, and none of them could possibly dream of suspecting the aunt's treachery.

As for the Miracle Girl, she lay on the swampy shore groaning with pain, too weak to move. Fortunately a woodcutter, passing that way, heard her pitiful cries. He drew near and found a blind but very beautiful girl lying almost unconscious, her long dishevelled hair blown about carelessly by the wind, and her silken dress bespattered with mud. The woodcutter stood above her and hesitated a little. He was a very poor man with a large family of eight children and a wife to feed. He did not know whether to take her home with him, or go and tell some bailiff of the king to attend to her. Then he thought to himself that she might die before help could reach her. So, his better nature triumphing

over his prudence, he picked up the maiden, as he muttered to himself:

“Every soul has its share in Allah’s care, and He will send me this poor creature’s provision!”

He carried the girl on his back and trudged behind his loaded beast.

When the woodcutter reached home, his wife met him at the door cursing and upbraiding:

“Have we not enough of our own,” she railed, “that you bring us another mouth to feed?”

The woodcutter soothed his wife’s wrath, assuring her that Allah would provide for their new charge and perchance bring them good fortune for her sake. Then he related to her how he found the maiden in a neglected swamp, to all appearances the victim of foul play.

But how amazed and surprised were the woodcutter and his wife to see how soon their good deed was to be rewarded!

For when the woodcutter’s wife was washing the girl’s face from mud, a gold and a silver coin dropped from her cheeks. The woman ran with joy to her husband and told him of the wonderful miracle that had just happened. The woodcutter and his children hurried and surrounded the girl, eying her with gasping wonder. At once the woodcutter’s

wife took off the Miracle Girl's dirty clothes and, after bathing her, gave her a new change of coarse but clean apparel. And still more surprised they were when the woodcutter's wife, combing the strange girl, saw that pearls and corals fell from her hair.

The Miracle Girl had regained consciousness, and after she had been given something to eat, was completely revived.

But what had become of the rest of the wedding party—of the cruel aunt, her deformed daughter and the Miracle Girl's brother?

They were given a separate palace with servants and maids to attend them. And when they had rested from their voyage, the mother queen of India announced her desire to visit the bridal party and look over the prospective bride of her son.

Khadijah did her best to doll up her deformed daughter and make her look pretty. She washed and scoured her clean, rouged her cheeks and lips, blackened her eyelids and manicured her hands. But "What could a bath woman do with an ugly face?" as the proverb asks.

So when the queen came, one look was enough to convince her that a trick had been played on her son, and that the Miracle Girl was not as beautiful

as she had been reported to be. For she had not suspected yet that Zarifa, the deformed girl, had been substituted for the true Miracle Girl. The queen-mother said to herself, however, that if the other qualities of the girl be what they are reputed to be, never mind beauty. So she said to the ugly girl: "Walk a few steps for me, my child."

The girl walked, but no roses and jasmines fell from her right side, nor lilies and orchids from her left. The queen was angry, but the wily Khadijah pacified the angry queen with soft words, saying that the voyage of the sea had much impaired the miraculous qualities of her daughter. For, naturally, she represented herself as the mother of the bride, and her daughter as the Miracle Girl.

While this was going on, the real Miracle Girl had gained enough strength to be able to walk about. And as she leaned in her walk to the right side roses and jasmines, fresh and fragrant, fell in profusion to the ground; and it was not the season for such flowers. The woodcutter, who was the first to see this strange sight, stood agape with astonishment, ejaculating praise to Allah at such a miracle. But the Miracle Girl, smiling knowingly at his great surprise, told him to take a basketful of the flowers and go under the king's palace and shout:

"Roses and jasmines for sale! Roses and jasmines for sale!"

"But," she urged on him, "take no money for your flowers. Part not with them except for a human eye."

The woodcutter did as he was ordered. He went under the king's palace and shouted: "Roses and jasmines for sale! Roses and jasmines for sale!"

And as the Miracle Girl had calculated, her aunt, hearing the peddler's voice, said to her daughter: "Now is our chance. We will buy flowers and hide them under your dress. When the queen comes again you will drop them a little at a time as you walk."

Then Khadijah called for the woodcutter and asked him how he sold his wares. The woodcutter replied, as the Miracle Girl had taught him, that he would not sell his flowers for money, but only for a human eye.

Khadijah got up and brought one of the Miracle Girl's eyes from its velvety jewel box and handed it to the woodcutter in exchange for his basketful of fresh roses and jasmines, and the woodcutter returned with the eye.

"Put it back in its socket," directed the Miracle Girl, "and call on the name of Allah." The wood-

cutter did so, and behold! the eye became rooted in its socket and, with the help of Allah, became whole again, as if it had never been removed or tampered with.

And on the next day the Miracle Girl leaned on her left side as she walked, and lilies and orchids fell on the ground. And again she told the woodcutter to go under the King's palace and shout his flowers for sale, and under no condition to part with them except for a human eye.

The woodcutter did as he was ordered and came back with the other eye, which the Miracle Girl put back in its socket as she had done with the first one. And now she regained her sight completely, while the woodcutter had become quite wealthy, what with the corals, pearls and gold and silver coins he was picking from his miraculous guest.

As for the cruel aunt and her daughter, when the queen visited them again, she repeated her order to the false miracle girl to walk first on the right, then on the left. The deformed girl obeyed the queen's command, and as she walked, leaning first on the right, then on the left, flowers did fall to the ground, but they were pale and withered flowers. Then the queen made her wash her face, but instead of a golden and a silver coin dropping each



from a cheek, rouge came off her face and dyed the water red. Next she had her comb her head, but instead of corals and pearls, vermin and dandruff fell.

The queen was incensed as she left the guest's palace. She told the king that they were being imposed upon, and that their son was made the victim of a practical joke by worthless people.

But the crafty Khadijah was up to the occasion once more. This time she accused her nephew, the Miracle Girl's brother, of being a sorcerer, who, being in love with her own daughter, had destroyed her miraculous qualities and changed her to her present state.

Believing this, the king, in his rage, gave command that the poor lad be burned in the public square.

Every one was talking now about the shameful way in which the strangers had deceived their king. Some blamed the lad, and some doubted the story of the aunt, naming her as the real culprit.

The woodcutter heard all this and repeated it at home.

And when the Miracle Girl heard it, she was gravely alarmed, for it was her own brother who was to be burned at the stake. She found out the

exact time set for the public burning, and when the time came went and hid behind a pillar of a public building.

Wood was piled high, and a great pyre was made in the middle of the public square. And when fire was set to the wood pile, and the flames were shooting their leaping tongues high into space, the red embers of the wood roaring with a crackling noise, the young man was led out to be burned.

At that very moment the Miracle Girl shouted from her hiding-place: "Oh my brother, my brother!" and burst into tears. And as her generous, large tears rolled down her cheeks, torrents of heavy rain fell and put out the fire.

The huge crowd that had gathered to witness the burning were swept off their feet with surprise. They heard the voice, and saw the miracle of the sudden rain, but they knew not where the voice came from; for the Miracle Girl had slipped away and gone to the woodcutter's hut before anybody could notice her.

The story of what had happened was soon told to the king who was as surprised as the rest. He ordered that the same performance be repeated the next day. At the same time he commanded his men to disperse in all directions in the public square and

lay hold on the one from whom the voice would proceed.

And so it came, that on the next day, when the fire was made ready and the lad was brought out again to be burned, his sister again cried: "Oh my brother, my brother!" and wept. And no sooner had her tears fallen than it rained as heavily as on the previous day. But when she tried to run away the king's men held her and brought her before His Majesty, who was quite taken by surprise at her surpassing beauty.

The king asked her who she was and what her story was. And the Miracle Girl told him her story from beginning to end, assuring him that she was the Miracle Girl and the bride-to-be of his son. The king, testing her to see if she was telling the truth, made her lean in her walk to the right and left. And as she did so roses and jasmines fell from her right side, orchids and lilies from her left. He asked her to wash her face before him, and as she did so a gold and a silver coin fell from her cheeks. The king had no doubt now that the young woman standing before him was the genuine Miracle Girl and the true bride of his son.

Immediately he gave orders that the cruel aunt and her daughter be burned on the same pyre that was prepared for the Miracle Girl's brother.

This done, the marriage festivities began in earnest, lasting forty days and forty nights.

And thus at last the full measure of relief came after distress, and the Miracle Girl became the Queen of India. Every year her parents visited her and when they grew old, she begged them to stay with her for good. At first they hesitated, for they were humble, unlettered people and it was not their wont to mingle in royal society. But when their daughter insisted, giving them a palace all to themselves, with servants and maids to attend them, they consented; and all lived happily ever after.

## THE SIMPLE SA-IDITE, OR THE WILES OF THE WOMEN OF CAIRO

**S**A-ID, the Arabic for Upper Egypt, is the general term applied to the country south of Cairo. The Sa-idites are taunted by the Cairoreens, as country people generally are everywhere by city people, for their simplicity and ignorance of city ways and manners. A rather uncharitable Egyptian proverb runs: "If your donkey is lost, ride a Sa-idite."

In one of the little hamlets of Sa-id, not far from Cairo, there lived a lazy dunce of a Sa-idite farmer who had a shrewd wife, originally a Cairoreen woman. The Sa-idite's wife, for a reason of her own best known to herself, was very anxious to get rid of her husband, who did very little work and stayed most of his time at home. Continually she dinned into his ear to go out and find something to occupy himself with like the other men of the town, but with little success. Finally she hit upon a plan to send him on a fool's errand to Cairo.

One day she said to him: "It is time that you did

something besides sitting around the house like a sick bull. Look at other men who go out and trade and become rich, while you are idling your time away. Here, I have put twenty chickens for you in a coop. Take them to Cairo and sell them. But don't you dare to come back till you have sold them all at a *majeedi* apiece (a *majeedi* being equivalent to our dollar). Take not a *para* less, and if you come without the chickens or with less than twenty *majeedis*, may Allah save you from the trouble that I will have in store for you!"

Now a *majeedi* was altogether too high a price to ask for a fowl in Egypt even in these days. How much more when our story began more than fifty years ago. But the Sa-idite was so simple that he did not realize this, and having been trained to obey his wife in all matters, unquestioning, he carried the coop of fowls on his back and trudged on the road leading to Cairo.

When the Sa-idite reached the great city, which he had never visited before, he was at a loss where to go to sell his chickens, so he chose one of the most prominent spots and stood beside his coop at the crossing of two of the busiest thoroughfares of the city, where people hurried back and forth in a never-ceasing stream.



"How do you sell these chickens, O Sa-idite?" people would stop and ask him. And the Sa-idite would answer, as his wife had instructed him: "*A majeedi* apiece." Then the would-be buyers would laugh at his ignorance and move on.

All day long he stood beside his coop till it was well nigh sunset, but not a fowl did he sell.

Now there happened to pass at that place one of those clever women who live by their wits, or, as the Arabic expression eloquently puts it: "Steal the eye-blackening from the eye-lashes" and with her were some women companions.

Observing the plight of the witless Sa-idite, the Cairoeen woman turned to her companions and said: "By our *Lady Bakhita* and the bones of all the holy walis, this man's wife has sent her husband on a fool's errand. Let us have some fun with him. What do you say if I take all his chickens from him, coop and all, without paying him a single *para*?"

The other women agreed that that would be a clever performance indeed, and egged her on to do it.

So the Cairoeen woman leader approached the Sa-idite and addressed him, saying: "My good fellow, how do you sell these chickens of yours?"

"A *majeedi* apiece," replied the Sa-idite, seriously, "even as my wife has told me."

"Very well," said the woman gently, "carry your coop and follow me."

The Sa-idite, beaming with delight that at last he had found a customer for his chickens, carried his coop on his head and followed the Cairoeen woman. They walked and walked until the woman stopped at a very imposing building, when she turned to the Sa-idite and said:

"Give me this coop and wait for me at this gate that I may go in and bring you the money from my husband."

The Sa-idite did as he was bid and, as the woman disappeared inside the building, he stood at the gate waiting for her. He waited and waited till it was quite dark. People went in and out of the building, but no lady came out to give him his money. At last he began to murmur, then complain loudly and shout, as people gathered around him to find what ailed him. He told them that a certain lady had bought twenty chickens from him at a *majeedi* apiece and had gone inside the palace but had not come out with the money.

The crowd laughed at the Sa-idite as they told him, to his chagrin and dismay, that the imposing

edifice he was standing by was not a palace at all but a public government building.

The Sa-idite went away dejected and sad at his new misfortune. He had no money to go to a public inn, and he was afraid to go back to his wife, with his hands empty of money and chickens. So he decided to sleep in the porch of a Greek grocer's shop, and so he did.

But early at sunrise the hustling shopkeeper came, and finding a stranger lying full length at the door-steps of his shop, kicked him awake as he hurled on him curses in his Greek tongue.

And the Sa-idite, rudely awakened in this fashion, and still heavy with sleep, moved on until he came to a pasha's stable, and there decided he would lay his head on the warm straw beside a well from which the pasha's horses were watered.

He had not slept more than a few winks when, who should pass there but the very same woman who had stolen his chickens, with her same companions. She spied him from the street and, recognizing him, turned to her friends and said:

"By Allah there lies our friend the Sa-idite. I will wager my ear-rings he was afraid to go back to his wife. Yesterday I stole his chickens, but to-day I will steal his clothes and teach him something of the wiles of the women of Cairo!"

So saying, she tiptoed to the well and, picking a small stone, threw it in. The Sa-idite, hearing the noise, awoke in fright as he heard the Cairoeen woman crying:

“Oh my bracelet! I dropped my bracelet in the well. My husband will kill me for that. Oh what shall I do, what shall I do?”

Then addressing herself to the Sa-idite, she pleaded:

“My good man, will you go down to the well and fetch me my bracelet, and I will give you an Egyptian pound?”

The Sa-idite was just praying for such a chance, and without the least hesitation stripped himself of his outer garments and climbed down with the rope tied to the coppice of the well. When he got to the bottom, he untied himself and began to search. But he searched and searched in vain. For how could he find a bracelet at the bottom of the well, when no bracelet was there in the first place?

In the meantime the Cairoeen woman carried away the Sa-idite's clothes, handed them to one of her companions and hid herself in the neighborhood, waiting for more mischief and fun.

Despairing of his search, the Sa-idite wanted to go up. To his surprise, however, he found that the



At last he began to murmur, then complain loudly and shout.





Cairoeen woman had pulled the rope up, and left him shivering in the cold pit.

The Sa-idite stood there howling and shouting for help, until the Pasha's servants, attracted by his shouting, rushed out and finding out the cause of the noise, pulled the Sa-idite from the well. The servants had a merry laugh at him as, with chattering teeth, he told them the story of his plight from the time he first set foot in Cairo to his present predicament. Finding him without clothes, they gave him some of their cast-away ones and sent him on his way with many a jibe and taunt ringing in his ears.

The Cairoeen woman, who had been hiding at the turn of the street, and who in the meantime had changed her outward appearance a little, came out now and, following the Sa-idite as he was walking away, crest-fallen and muttering curses under his breath at Cairo and the Cairoeens, tapped him gently on the shoulder saying:

"Oh Sa-idite, would you like to work for me, and I will reward you liberally?"

The Sa-idite turned around sharply and was about to abuse the woman, not knowing that she was the same one who had stolen his chickens and clothes, in his rage against women from whom all

his troubles seemed to proceed. Then he remembered his wife and realized that he was still sans chickens, sans money, and but for the mercy of the pasha's servants, sans clothes. So, checking his rage, he accepted the proposition of the Cairoen woman and followed her home.

When they got there, the Cairoen woman changed her dress and put on a most gorgeous one which even a pasha's wife would envy. Then putting a white satin *habara* over her dress, and covering her face with a chic, transparent veil of finest silk, she went out and hired a carriage, and on her way back bought a costly valet livery, glistening with gold braids, a silver-headed walking stick and withal a new *fez* with a thick Moghrabite tassel. Placing these before the Sa-idite she told him to put them on, impressing on him with an impish wink and a significant shake of her finger that from thence on he must do exactly as she commanded him, and under no condition to speak until he is told to do so. Then she entered the carriage and ordered the Sa-idite, now garbed in the full livery of a pasha's footman, to sit beside the driver, who was told to drive straight to the jewelers' bazaar.

The carriage stopped at the shop of the chief jeweler and the Sa-idite stepped out, as he had

been instructed, opened the carriage door, bowed and walked before his lady to the jeweler's shop.

And the jeweler, not doubting that the lady was the wife of a wealthy pasha of the city, rose from the *mastaba* of his shop, and bowing and wringing his hands together with a polite smile, he welcomed his fair customer. Then he ordered one of his clerks to make coffee, while he in person waited on the supposed pasha's wife. He brought out on a velvet-cushioned tray his most expensive jewels, rings, and choice pearl strings, and laid them before his lady customer, who, gingerly sampling them with the tips of her dainty fingers, as if they were so many baubles and gewgaws, set aside some. Then when coffee was served and the lady had sipped her cup leisurely, she addressed the merchant with a tone of dignified hauteur.

"I shall take these home to show to my husband," she said, "and if he likes them I will come back with the price to buy them."

Then, pointing to the Sa-idite, who was standing stiff in the corner, she said:

"I will leave my valet here as security till I come back."

The merchant, not wishing to offend a lady of high birth or spoil so profitable a sale, reluctantly

allowed her to go with the jewels, thinking to himself surely she must come back for her valet.

The Cairoen woman did come back, but only to the further rue and sorrow of the jeweler.

For no sooner was she inside her carriage than she gave order to the driver to drive as fast as his swift horses could gallop to the municipal cemetery on the outskirts of the city. There she alighted and, going straight to the cemetery keeper, asked him if he could lend her the corpse of some poor baby who perchance had died that very same day, and, pressing a gold piece in his palm, assured him with a solemn oath that she would bring it back in an hour's time.

The cemetery keeper, his conscience giving in at the sight of the gold coin, could see no harm done in the arrangement and consented readily to the lady's request.

The woman then drove back quickly to her home, where she washed the corpse, sprinkled it with rose water, arrayed it in the most elegant baby dress, carried it in her lap, and drove back to the jeweler's shop.

By this time the jeweler's suspicions were aroused by the long absence of his lady customer. He waited and waited, but no pasha's wife showed

up. At last he screwed up enough courage to ask the valet where his mistress had gone, and why it took her such a long time to come back. The poor Sa-idite was nonplussed and knew not what to answer. The jeweler became exasperated by the stupid silence of the valet. He stepped up to him and, just as he was holding him by the breast ready to hurl him against the wall, in came the lady customer with the baby in her arms. She rushed and pushed the jeweler, and the jeweler in his anger pushed her. At that very moment she let the baby drop and, picking it up from the floor, lifted her voice in a piercing lament.

"My son, my son!" she cried. "He killed the pasha's son. Wait till my husband hears about this!"

The jeweler was pale with fright, as he tried to quiet the grieved lady.

"My honorable lady," he pleaded, "keep this a secret and I will settle with you most liberally. I will give you free all the jewels you picked out."

"No!" snapped the lady defiantly, "that is not enough, I must have two hundred pounds besides."

The jeweler had no other choice but to give in.

So the Cairoen woman went away with her pilfered treasure and her valet, the simple Sa-idite,

walking in a daze of amazement behind her. She rode her carriage and ordered the driver to drive her back home.

When she had reached home, she dismissed the driver and his carriage, and turning to the Sa-idite she told him, with a twinkle of mischief and triumph, the story of her pranks with him, up to that hour, adding:

“Here are twenty pounds for your trouble. Now go straight home; stay not another day in Cairo, for your wife had purposely sent you on a fool’s errand to the city to get you out of her way.”

The Sa-idite, with a profusion of words and gestures, thanked his former tormentor and present benefactor and went on his way beaming with joy.

He had not gone very far, walking aimlessly in the streets of Cairo, when a group of his own countrymen, who had come to work in the city as common laborers, spied him from afar and shouted to him, asking him whence he got the beautiful finery. He gave them an evasive answer and told them that he was going straight to his hometown in Sa-id.

“No, you shall not go without us,” they insisted. “Come along, for we are working at a building and we will be through in a few days; then we will all go together.”



At first he resisted, but finally they prevailed on him, and he decided to stay with them. He asked them where he could keep his money and brilliant livery in trust, and they pointed out a certain Hajj Ali Zayyat, a pious and godly shop-keeper who had made the pilgrimage to Mecca several times and was reputed to be a very honest trust-keeper.

So the Sa-idite went to Ali Zayyat, bought from him an old working costume, left his money and livery in his trust and joined his countrymen who were working with a building contractor in another quarter of the city.

After a few days, when the building job was finished, and the laborers were paid off, they planned to meet at the inn where they had stayed. As for our friend, the simple Sa-idite, he proceeded straight to Hajj Ali Zayyat to claim his trust.

“Peace be upon you, oh Hajj Ali.”

But Hajj Ali, who was counting the beads of his rosary and mumbling pious words of prayer, looked vacantly at the Sa-idite and, still counting his beads, replied:

“And on you be peace. What can I do for you, my son?”

The Sa-idite proceeded: “Do you remember the

twenty pounds and the new livery suit which I brought you to keep in trust for me? May you please give them back to me, for I am now ready to go to Sa-id."

Hajj Ali denied that any such trust was left with him, and swore that he had never seen the Sa-idite before. Then, turning to those who had gathered about in idle curiosity, he spread out his upturned palms in a gesture of wounded innocence and cried out:

"Listen, O followers of Mohammed! Did you ever hear of a Sa-idite to possess twenty pounds and a livery suit and yet work in the mud as this fellow claims?" Then, turning to the Sa-idite, he said:

"Fear Allah, O man, and fear jehanna whose fuel is of men and stones! I visited the tomb of the Prophet. May Allah bless and praise him, three times. I have never missed my Friday prayers, and I read my *Koran* day and night, and now you, worthless clout of an ignorant Sa-idite, mean to stand there and accuse me of such a venal sin? Have you ever heard the like of this, O believers in Allah and His Prophet?"

In vain did the Sa-idite try to lay his case before the swelling crowds. He was booed and jeered and

driven away with many a kick and a curse from all sides.

Gloomily the Sa-idite went away, "stumbling in his tears," as the Arabic expression says. He was cursing himself and his unlucky star that he had not listened to the counsel of the Cairoeen woman, when, whom should he bump into but she herself!

"As I live! O Sa-idite, are you still here? And what have you done with your brand new livery and the new *fez* which I gave you? Do not tell me you have lost your money, too?"

Contritely and with a sheepish voice, trembling on the verge of tears the Sa-idite told the story of his encounter with Hajj Ali Zayyat to the Cairoeen woman, who could scarcely hold herself to the finish before she broke into a hearty laugh.

"Is that all your trouble, my innocent, unsuspecting fellah?" Then she assured him that it was a simple matter indeed to restore his trust from the dishonest trust-keeper.

"To-morrow, by this time," she directed, "meet me at this very spot, where I will be with another woman. Then follow me at a distance to Hajj Ali Zayyat, and when I wave to you with my handkerchief approach and boldly claim your trust from him, as if nothing had happened between the two of you."

This the Sa-idite promised to do. And on the morrow, on the appointed time and at the appointed place, he came and found the Cairoeen woman and a friend of hers, who was made up to look like her maid, waiting for him.

The Cairoeen woman proceeded toward the shop of Hajj Ali Zayyat and motioned to the Sa-idite who walked behind her at a distance as she had told him, until she came to the trust-keeper's shop.

"Is this the shop of the worthy and pious Hajj Ali Zayyat?" enquired the Cairoeen woman in unaffected innocence, "I have asked about the most godly and honest trust-keeper, and they directed me to you. Now my good sire, my husband went on a pilgrimage to Mecca more than a year ago, and I am becoming restive for his safety. It is my desire to follow him and look for him, and I have a trifle trust which I seek to keep with you, a few jewels not worth more than five hundred pounds altogether. If I come back alive I will come and claim them, but if it should be the will of Allah that I die on the way, then they shall be yours with my full consent and free will, may Allah prosper you and benefit us with your piety."

As she said that, she turned and made a sly motion with her handkerchief to the Sa-idite, who

then boldly came up and planted himself at the door of the trust-keeper's shop.

But before the Sa-idite even had an opportunity to open his mouth and speak, Hajj Ali Zayyat intercepted him, saying:

"May Allah curse Iblees, my son! Aren't you the same fellow who came here yesterday to claim a trust you had left with me? Forgive me, my man. Now I remember who you are and recall well your trust, praised be He who never forgets. Here it is, I had wrapped it up and laid it aside in a corner on the shelf over my head."

Saying which, Hajj Ali Zayyat reached out for the package in which the Sa-idite's livery and money were wrapped and handed it to him.

This done, the trust-keeper turned to the Cairoeen lady, whose trust he was now very eager to secure. But before he had a chance to resume conversation with her, the woman who had made up as the Cairoeen lady's maid came dancing and singing with a tambourine.

"Glad news, oh my mistress, your master has come from the pilgrimage, and he is verily this hour at home asking for you."

The Cairoeen lady made believe she was overcome with joy, and she, too, began to dance and sing.

Then Hajj Ali Zayyat, sensing what was going on, stepped down from his shop and joined in the dance.

At this, the Cairoen woman stopped her dancing and, turning to the shop-keeper, said:

"I dance because my husband has come back. This woman dances because her master has come back and because her mistress is happy, but what motive could have impelled you to join us in the dance?"

To which Hajj Ali Zayyat replied: "It is your tricks, oh mother of tricks, that have made me dance!"

Then the Cairoen woman turned to the Sa-idite and said:

"Now that you are in possession of your valuable things, run home to Sa-id before some one robs you of them, and turns your pockets inside out while you are still in Cairo!"

Thanking her with wild gestures and ejaculations, the Sa-idite, not stopping to join his friends in the inn, sped on his way till he reached his hometown in Sa-id.



## WHY HE ROSE EARLY

**I**N Basra, along the Tigris River, there are numerous rickety wooden cafés to which the native men resort day and night. These cafés are never closed, and it is a custom among the merchantmen of that town to rise early, go to one of these cafés and sip a cup of coffee or smoke a nargelah before going to their shops.

Now, there were two Basrites, Mustapha and Mahmoud, very close friends, who always met at one of these cafés early mornings. But Mahmoud noticed ere long that however early he rose he always found Mustapha had preceded him to the café and was waiting for him.

So one day Mahmoud said to himself: "To-morrow I will rise up very early and beat Mustapha to the café." He called upon his wife to wake him at dawn, which she did. He arose, went through his ablutions and prayers, ate a hurried breakfast and went straight to the café, saying to himself: "Now I will surely beat Mustapha in rising early."

But when he reached the café, there he found Mustapha seated, cross-legged, puffing serenely at his nargelah.

Mustapha looked up, as though he had been anxiously awaiting the arrival of his friend. "The top of the morning to you," he was the first to begin the greeting. But Mahmoud was not quite himself as he grudgingly replied: "And to you, my friend."

As the two sat silently for a while, Mustapha enquired the cause of his friend's silence and apparent chagrin. Mahmoud laid aside the pipe of his nargelah and replied: "My brother, I will be frank with you. There is nothing seriously the matter with me. For the last two weeks I have been trying to rise early enough to be here at the café before you and I have not succeeded. Tell me, brother, what is the secret of your early rising?"

To the surprise of Mahmoud, Mustapha broke into merry laughter, and then said: "There is no secret in the matter, my brother. You see, I am married to two wives while you are married only to one. When I rise in the morning, one of my wives brings me my shoes and turban. The other helps me put on my girdle and the two together hustle about to prepare my breakfast; and so in no time at all I am ready and on my way to the café."

When Mahmoud heard this his features brightened and he beamed with a smile of satisfaction.



“You see I am married to two wives while you are married only to one.”



"Is that all?" he asked surprisingly. "Then I shall surely take unto myself another wife."

And so in a few days more Mahmoud married again, and brought his second wife home.

The very first day after his second marriage, things did not go so well with him. When he returned from his shop in the evening each of his two wives came to him with a complaint about the other. The next night it was worse, for the two wives began to quarrel and call each other names. He listened to the tale of each and settled the quarrel between them.

But on the third night, things became altogether intolerable. The two wives came to blows and pulled each other's hair. They raised such a rumpus that Mahmoud, without waiting to eat his supper, hurried out and went straight to the café.

There he sat alone an hour or two when in came Mustapha.

Mahmoud looked at him meaningly and, shaking his head in a reproaching manner, said:

"Have you done with me, O Mustapha, have you done with me?"

## THE TALE OF CLEVER HASAN AND THE TALKING HORSE

ONCE upon a time there was a king who had a son, his first-born, called Hasan, who was born on the same day his mother died. On the same day also was born a horse in the royal stables, and the king's son and the horse grew together and were fond of each other.

That horse, however, was not an ordinary horse, but one miraculously born, for he could cry and talk. But he would talk only to Hasan, when they were alone. The horse would follow his young master to school and to play with other boys, and the two were inseparable companions except at night when each went his way to sleep, one in the king's palace, the other in the royal stables.

Now, the king was still young, and much as he loved his departed wife, time came when her memory became somewhat dim in his mind, and when his heart gave way to a beautiful princess of the realm whom he took to wife.

And as days passed, the new queen, the step-mother of Hasan, had children of her own and she grew more and more to hate her step-son, who had



become then a stripling of a young man. There was none among the young men of his father's kingdom stronger than he or more intelligent. He excelled all in his studies at school, as well as in horse-riding, wrestling, weight-lifting and javelin-throwing, and his fellow schoolmates called him Clever Hasan. And for these very things the queen hated Clever Hasan with a hatred as bitter as death, but she kept her secret to herself, except for a little coldness which she could not help showing toward him.

One day she opened her heart to her nurse, a cruel, shrewd, old woman who was devoted to the queen, having been her mother's nurse before her.

"My dear nurse," confided the queen, "have you a place for a secret that I wish to communicate to you?"

"As deep as a bottomless pit," assured the nurse. "Fear not, my daughter, apple of my eye, and tell me what is on your mind, for verily I have noticed that something has been troubling you lately, and your cheeks have become sallow from worrying."

"The truth of the matter," said the queen, "is that I hate my step-son and wish to remove him from the way, but have not the courage to do so lest I be exposed and pay the penalty with my own

life. And should I let him live he will surely show up my sons with his supreme skill and prowess, and they will have no chance with him whatsoever. He is already his father's favorite and all the king's subjects love him and are attached to him."

"That be a simple matter, my daughter," the nurse consoled. "All you have to do is to poison a few needles and stick the points upward in the threshold of the door, so that when your step-son enters the house he will step on one of them and soon will die."

The queen did as the nurse had told her, but she did not suspect that the Talking Horse was listening to their conversation under the window. For that was what the horse was doing, and he had not heard it before he galloped as fast as his four swift legs could carry him and, seeking out his master, told him of all that had passed between the evil queen and her nurse.

That was why, when Clever Hasan entered the house he jumped over the threshold to safety, but a son of the queen who happened to come close after him, not suspecting anything wrong, stepped on one of the poisoned needles and in less than twenty-four hours had passed away.

The queen was grief-stricken, and when she

learned from their wily nurse that nobody could have overheard their conversation but the Talking Horse, her hatred was transferred for the moment from Clever Hasan to the Talking Horse.

Again the queen confided in her nurse, asking her advice for the best way to get rid of the Talking Horse without arousing anybody's suspicions.

The nurse advised her to feign that she was ill, wash her face with *saffron water* to make it look pale, and lie in bed refusing all food. This the queen did, while the nurse went straight forth to the court physician and, offering him a rich bribe from the queen, instructed him to say, when he was called to attend the queen, that nothing would save her life but the heart of a horse who was born on the same day his master was born.

The court physician did as he was instructed. When the king asked to see the queen, he was told that she was taken suddenly ill, and that her condition seemed to be serious. The king hurried to his wife's bedside and was alarmed as he looked at her sallow complexion. He sent for the court physician and the latter came post-haste. But when he was through diagnosing the patient he shook his head dubiously.

"What? speak!" commanded the king, who was

now on pins and needles, waiting with bated breath the verdict of the royal dispenser of medicine.

"I am afraid . . .," uttered the physician simulating a very serious mien, as he continued shaking his head.

"Afraid of what! Speak or I will silence you forever with my sword," roared the king, confirming his words with a menacing move of his right hand to the hilt of his sword.

"Afraid," continued the physician, "that in all your kingdom there is not to be found the medicine which alone will save the queen's life. For verily she suffers from a malady which, according to Hippocrates, nothing would heal but the heart of a horse born on the very same day his master was born."

"Is that all?" cried the king joyously, his features relaxing with a broad smile. "Praised be Allah, we do not have to go further than our own royal stables for this medicine. To-morrow, the first thing in the morning, we will slaughter Clever Hasan's horse and feed his heart to the queen."

Just then the Talking Horse was passing by, just in time to overhear the conversation and discover the plot against his own life. He went to his crib and refused to eat his fodder. And when Clever

Hasan went that evening, before retiring to bed, to visit his horse as was his wont, he found him crying like a human baby.

"Why do you cry, my horse?" enquired Clever Hasan. "Has any one hit you or tried to do you harm?"

"Listen!" said the horse as he stopped crying. "Last time I saved *your* life. Now it is your turn to save mine." Then he related to him what had taken place and what he had overheard under the window of the royal palace.

"And what shall I do?" asked Clever Hasan anxiously.

"Our lives here are not safe any more. Let us run away to-night. You ride on my back and we will go as far away from this place as my swift legs will carry us."

No sooner said than done. Quietly, Clever Hasan led the Talking Horse out of the stable, and, using a door which led through an underground passage into the woods adjoining the palace, he rode the horse and galloped away, casting back one last longing look at his father's palace.

In a few minutes he was out in the open country, and in a few hours he was out of his father's realm.

Days and nights, nights and days, Clever Hasan

traveled over plains and hills, eating from the fruits and nuts of the wild woods and drinking from the clear, crystal springs, until he came to a huge cave at the foot of a hill. It was evening, and seeing fire-light inside the cave, he went in, leading his horse behind him. He was so lonesome for human company that he did not listen to the horse's warning that there might be robbers inside. However, he was on his guard, walking with cautious steps, with his right hand firmly clasped to his sword's hilt, ready at an instant to draw it and defend himself.

But his fears were as misplaced as his precaution was unnecessary. When he drew near to the fire he found a very old man, his white, matty beard reaching to the floor, sitting cross-legged before a fire warming himself.

"Peace be upon you, my venerable old man," Clever Hasan was the first to speak.

"And on you be peace," returned the old man. "Had not your salaam preceded your words, I would have munched your meat and crunched your bones. Advance, Oh Clever Hasan, and sit beside the fire, for I have been awaiting your arrival these many days."

Then the old man told Clever Hasan where he could find some food for himself, goats' milk and



cheese, and some fodder for his horse in the cave. And Clever Hasan ate with a lusty appetite and when he had his fill of the frugal meal he went back and sat opposite the old man beside the fire.

"Listen well to what I am about to say, my son," said the old man solemnly. "To-morrow, by the rise of the sun, I shall be dead. Wash my corpse, recite the *takbir* over me and bury me in this very cave, and I will make you heir to all my treasures."

Then the old man handed Clever Hasan seven keys, as he continued:

"There are seven rooms in this cave corresponding to these seven keys. You may open any of the six and take therefrom whatever your heart may desire, but the seventh, the last from the right, you may not open. In the same cave is a flock of sheep and goats. You may take them out to pasture wherever you wish, in three directions, north, south and west, but beware taking them east."

Early next morning Clever Hasan arose, and sure enough he found the old man dead. He shook him to make sure that he was really dead, and the old man, now a lifeless corpse, rolled off like a stiff log of wood.

Clever Hasan performed the proper obsequies for the dead man, dug a grave for him in the centre

of the cave and, reciting the *takbir* prayer, buried him.

A day passed in which Clever Hasan took out the goats and his horse for pasture. But on the next morning he could hardly wait to find out what could be in the rooms whose keys the old man had passed to him before he died.

He opened the first one and discovered several cedar chests without locks. He opened them and found them full of all kinds and varieties of precious stones—diamonds, pearls, emeralds, sapphires, onyx, amethyst, turquoise and many other varieties that transfixed even a king's son with surprise. Then Clever Hasan opened the second room and found in it a collection of weapons of all descriptions hung from the walls—swords, cutlasses, *yataghans*, axes, lances, *assagais* and many other kinds of formidable weapons, which made the room look like an arsenal. He opened the third room and found it full of armors. In the fourth he found costumes made of the richest textiles—silk, satin and gold and silver cloth. *Jubbahs* embroidered with emeralds, rubies and pearls hung from the walls next to jerkins and abas of gold cloth and tabby silk; boots of finest *morocco* and *cordovan* lay about in disorderly array, and *turbans* of finest

muslin and gossamer silk. In short, complete outfits from turban to babouj, fit for all conceivable occasions, could be found in that room. In the fifth room Clever Hasan found numerous saddles of finest leather, with gold and silver stirrups, caparisons embroidered with gold thread and precious stones, steel and silver breast-plates, bridles, bits and knapsacks—all that a horseman needs or could wish for to groom his horse for travel or battle tournament.

Then Clever Hasan opened the sixth room, and there, from a subterranean source, issued forth a stream of gold and a stream of silver. He dipped his hand in one and washed one side of his head, then dipped his hand in the other and washed the other half. And Clever Hasan's hair became half of gold and half of silver.

By now Clever Hasan had come to the seventh room, and he stood before it hesitating. Should he open it or should he not! He recalled the solemn warning of the old man and thought to himself that it could contain nothing of the earthly goods of life that he would care for. He was a king's son and the heir to priceless riches which he had just finished inspecting, so why be too greedy and fall in the gin of one's own cupidity?

And to take away his mind from the seventh room and the temptation of opening it, Clever Hasan again took out the flock of sheep and goats and his horse to pasture.

Day after day Clever Hasan did the same thing, but his mind was always on that mysterious seventh room. So one day, as his mind was still wandering in the direction of the cave, he strayed with his flock in the direction of the east. He had not gone very far when he came upon a most wonderful meadow, which spread before him like an endless green carpet of alfalfa, clover and sesame grass. In the middle of that meadow stood a huge oak tree. To it Clever Hasan directed his steps, wondering to himself why he had not discovered that rich pasturage before. When he came to the oak tree he sat beneath it, for he was tired and perspiring with the heat of the day, and, unbridling his horse, he sent him off to graze with the goats as he himself laid his head against the trunk of the oak tree to rest. In another minute he felt that his eyelids were as heavy as lead and he gave himself up to the power of slumber, snoring deeply.

Then suddenly, as if in sleep, Clever Hasan heard a terrifying sound, like that of a typhoon or whirlwind, followed by a heart-rending neigh of his

horse, which called out with a piercing cry: "Master! master! Wake up, climb the tree and save your life. Alas, we are all doomed!" The goats ran in all directions, bleating piteously.

Terror-stricken, Clever Hasan jumped to his feet and without waiting to find out the cause of all that confusion, hastily climbed to a safe retreat on one of the lower limbs of the oak tree. Then looking ahead he saw what looked like a cloud of dust, and presently from that cloud of dust emerged a horrible-looking *ghoul*, with her shaggy hair bristling out like the quills of a porcupine, and her protruding tusks like scythes. Swiftly the *ghoul* overtook some of the sheep, for with their heavy tails they could not run as fast as the goats, and, tearing them limb from limb, she proceeded to devour them.

But the horse ran safely to the cave. And Clever Hasan realized that he had taken the direction which the old man had warned him not to take.

When the *ghoul* was through devouring the sheep, she turned her head in one direction then another, sniffing the air and scenting Clever Hasan, she made for him with heavy steps, reeling to one side then to another. And when she came to the base of the tree, she looked up and said:

"Fi, fo, fum! I smell the flesh of a Mosleman.

Come down, Oh Clever Hasan, and let me devour you."

But Clever Hasan would hardly have deserved his name if he had done so. He replied defiantly:

"Come up yourself, if you want to devour me."

The *ghoul* could not climb. So, to reach Clever Hasan she piled some stones and, climbing them, came up to near where Clever Hasan was. She made an attempt to reach him.

Without losing any time, Clever Hasan grabbed the *ghoul* by her hair, tied her to a limb of the tree and, kicking the pile of stones from under her, he drew out his sword and slew her.

Clever Hasan returned to the cave to look for his horse, which he found waiting for him anxiously. The horse congratulated his master on his safety. But Clever Hasan was still itching with curiosity about the seventh room and what it might contain, so he hardly slept that night, and early next morning he went and opened it.

A strange sight met his eyes. A huge black steed, his eyes burning with a fiery sparkle, was tied with a heavy chain before a manger, with a stone basin of water next to it. Eat all the horse could, and drink all he could, neither the fodder nor the water diminished.



The horse, to the surprise of Clever Hasan, spoke to him:

"Release me!" he pleaded, "and I will reward you for your good deed!"

Hasan took pity on the chained horse and released him. But behold! as soon as he released him the horse changed into a giant *marid*.

"Choose, oh Clever Hasan, what sort of death I shall cause you to die, for your moments are numbered," threatened the *marid*, as he fixed Clever Hasan with his frightful eyes, which seemed to sparkle with wrath.

Clever Hasan shook in his boots and turned pale, so frightened was he. But he managed to stammer:

"What have I done to you, oh ingrate *marid*? Is this the reward of kindness which you promised me with your own mouth?"

"This will avail you nothing," said the *marid* sternly, "for that is what you deserve in the first place for being the son of a king who kept in his stable my stolen mate, who had been changed into a mare by a sorcerer!"

All this time the Talking Horse was listening at the entrance of the seventh room, and at hearing that the *marid* was his own father he rushed in crying:

“Father! I pray you save Clever Hasan’s life, as he has saved mine. For he is my best friend and has been closer than a brother to me!”

It was now the *marid’s* turn to be surprised. But when he had found out that the Talking Horse was indeed his son, and had heard the story of his escape with Clever Hasan, the *marid’s* wrath turned into a feeling of great elation and gratitude.

The *marid* offered to reward Clever Hasan now with any reward he would name, but Clever Hasan only asked that he be left alone, to seek his fortune for himself. The *marid* consented reluctantly. As for the Talking Horse, he chose to remain with Clever Hasan and go with him wherever he went. But before parting, the *marid* gave Clever Hasan a few hairs, saying:

“Whenever you want me burn one of these hairs and I will suddenly come to you, even if you be at the other end of the world from me.”

Then bidding Clever Hasan and his own son, the Talking Horse, good-by, the *marid* disappeared.

Clever Hasan travelled on his horse’s back till he came in sight of a great city, whose gilded domes and tall, pointed minarets glistened in the distance.

After a little consultation between Clever Hasan and the Talking Horse, it was decided that it would be a better policy to remain where he was, and Ha-

san proceed alone to the city. But whenever he wanted him, Clever Hasan would go outside the wall of the city and whistle for him, and the horse would come galloping to him.

Then Clever Hasan continued his journey to the city on foot, and before he had gone very far he met a shepherd on the way.

Clever Hasan stopped and greeted the shepherd who returned the greeting with a better one. Then Clever Hasan asked the shepherd if he would exchange clothes with him. The shepherd looked at Clever Hasan with no little surprise, then at his dress, the same one in which he had come out from his father's royal palace, and thought in his mind that the stranger was mad. But rather than argue with him and lose the bargain, the shepherd consented at once.

Now garbed in the shepherd's clothes, Clever Hasan walked on until he came upon a spring of water, near which lay the body of a sheep. He took out its large paunch, washed it thoroughly and, cutting it into the shape of a cap, pulled it tight over his head. He looked at his shadow in the spring and chuckled heartily at himself. His disguise was complete. Anybody looking on him now could not help but take him for a scurvy beggar.

It was eventide when Clever Hasan reached the

city. Before him stood an imposing palace, overlooking a magnificent garden in which grew all kinds of vegetables, rose-bushes and fruit trees. He asked about them and he was told that they were the royal palace and garden. Then he went up to the gardener, who was standing before his cottage at the door, and greeting him, said:

“Oh worthy gardener, could you use an able-bodied man who would serve you for his food and lodging?”

The gardener looked askance at Clever Hasan, but wishing to relieve himself of much work that had kept him tied to the royal garden day and night, he took him in.

“And what may your name be, my lad?” asked the gardener.

“My name,” replied Clever Hasan, “is Baldy, just Baldy. That is what my folk call me.”

“That is a funny name, indeed,” commented the gardener, laughingly, “but it seems to fit you like a tight garment.”

Clever Hasan assumed his duties next day with alacrity and zeal. He helped in digging, planting, pruning, raking and all the other menial tasks that fall to a gardener’s assistant, and the gardener was pleased with him and satisfied with his work.

Now, it happened that the ruler of that city was a sultan who had three lovely and beautiful daughters, Zubaida, Zulfa and Zainab, but the loveliest and most beautiful was the youngest, Zainab.

One day, as the gardener had gone to the mosque prayer on Friday, and Clever Hasan was left alone in the garden, he chanced to look up to the sultan's palace just as Princess Zainab, who had just come out of her royal bath, opened the window of her chamber and stood before it drying her beautiful hair, which fell in raven-black tresses over her alabaster shoulders. Clever Hasan stole a look at her, his heart went pit-a-pat, and his manly breast heaved with a sigh of a passion the like of which he had never experienced before. In short, he fell right there and then in love with the adorable Princess Zainab, and nothing short of possessing her would heal his smitten heart.

When the gardener came back, he noticed the change in his assistant, Baldy, but he thought to himself that he might be homesick or a little indisposed, and said nothing about it.

A week passed, and again the gardener went to attend the mosque prayer. But Clever Hasan, in the meantime, had thought out for himself a plan whereby to attract the attention of the princess.

No sooner had the gardener left the gate of the garden than Clever Hasan went outside the city wall and whistled for his horse, which came running to him. Then, he burned one of the hairs of the *marid*, who suddenly appeared.

"Here am I, a slave between your hands. What may your order be?" asked the *marid*.

And Clever Hasan said: "Bring me at once, oh good *marid*, from the arsenal of the cave a royal suit of armor, all red, and a sword of the finest tempered steel that will hack an iron bar as if it were a tender willow twig." The *marid* bowed again and withdrew, and in another minute he came back with the suit of armor and the sword, as Clever Hasan had requested.

At once, Clever Hasan doffed his shepherd's disguise, donned the magic armor, and, mounting his charger, with his gold and silver hair flying in the air, he pranced back and forth in the garden a few times, hacking the fruit-laden branches of the trees to the right and left. Then handing the armor to the *marid*, and dismissing him with the horse, Clever Hasan put on again his shepherd's tattered clothes. Princess Zainab who had looked from her window saw the whole thing.

When the gardener came back from prayer he found the garden in a chaotic state.



"Who did this, oh ill-luck bearing Baldy?" asked the gardener angrily, as he made a move to strike Clever Hasan.

"Oh master," meekly protested the royal assistant gardener, swiftly dodging the blows, "a thousand horsemen attacked me in your absence, and I drove them away with this stick," pointing to a heavy hickory stick lying near by. The gardener, his wrath fading away at the clownish answer of his assistant, laughed merrily and let him go unharmed. Then the two set about to restore the garden as nearly as possible to its former state.

A week passed and when Friday came round the gardener again wanted to go to the mosque prayer. With an eloquent shake of his finger at Clever Hasan, the gardener enjoined him to keep watch this time on the royal garden.

And again Clever Hasan played his prank on the gardener, but more to attract the attention of his fair princess than out of villainy or malice. This time when he burned another hair and the *marid* appeared as he had done before, Clever Hasan asked him for a bright white suit of armor and a sword as sharp as the one he had brought him before. A few minutes more, and Clever Hasan, mounted on his horse, was charging back and forth

in the garden and cutting off more branches of the fruit trees.

This time Princess Zainab not only saw Clever Hasan, but even threw to him her handkerchief, in which she had rolled her own ring. Clever Hasan, with a swift move, picked up the handkerchief while still mounted, and looking up, saw Princess Zainab smile to him. He kissed the handkerchief and bowed to her gallantly, as she shyly withdrew from the window.

What cared Clever Hasan then, when an hour later, the gardener came back and gave him the scolding of his life, and would have topped it with a sound thrashing if Clever Hasan had not run? It was enough to know that his fair princess returned his love, albeit he was still wondering how to reach her, and still more how to win her hand.

But this came about in a manner Clever Hasan had never dreamed of or could ever have anticipated.

It happened that the king of that city had made a vow that his three daughters must marry all at once. But since it was quite unlikely that three suitors should come at the same time and be acceptable to the three princesses together, the king, at last fearing that his daughters might remain as

old maids on his hands, decreed that on a certain day all the available young men of his kingdom should pass in review before the fair princesses, and that whomsoever one of these princesses should choose on that day to be her spouse, she would hit with an apple.

On the appointed day a grand stand was erected in front of the king's palace. The princesses, seated on three daises in the middle of the stand, were surrounded with the king, queen and all the courtiers, viziers and grandees of the kingdom, while court criers went about in the streets of the capital shouting at the top of their voices that every available young man, rich or poor, of noble or humble birth, must hurry forth and pass in review before the king's palace, that their royal highnesses, the king's daughters, might pick their choice of the kingdom's youth for husbands.

It need hardly be told here that every bachelor of marriageable age who thought anything of himself at all groomed himself for that rare occasion and hied him to the king's palace. Some went on richly caparisoned steeds, some on foot. There were princes of the royal blood, distant relatives of the king; there were sons of the nobility, whose fathers were courtiers or companions of the king; there were gallant knights who had distinguished them-

selves in battle or in single combat, and there were also common, ordinary, honest young men whose hearts beat with high hopes and aspirations, notwithstanding their common origin or lot. Princes or paupers, knights or common laborers, all looked their best on that day. And all passed before the reviewing stand at the appointed hour.

As the young men passed by, the king's eldest daughter, Princess Zubaida, threw her apple on the *grand vizier's* son, and the middle daughter, Princess Zulfa, threw her apple on the *cadi's* son. But the third and youngest, Princess Zainab, refused to throw her apple, for all the king and queen pointed to her this or that one among the good-looking youths of the realm.

At last the king, in wrathful desperation, cried out: "Is there any young man left in the city who has not passed in review?"

And one of the king's courtiers replied that he had heard of one young man who had not shown up—the scurvy assistant of the royal gardener.

"Fetch him out and let him pass before us," thundered the king. "By the grave of my ancestors, if she does not make up her mind, and that pretty soon, I will give her hand in marriage to none other than that same scurvy dunce of a dirt plodder!"

Messengers were thereupon immediately des-

patched to the royal garden to fetch Baldy. It was the order of the king, they explained to him, that he go with them and pass in review like the rest of the unmarried young men of the kingdom, that the youngest daughter of the king might choose a spouse for herself among them, not neglected to add their own comment that he need fear no such fate, as she had already refused the noblest and bravest of her father's kingdom.

Baldy, who was weeding a bed of cabbages, paid little attention to the words of the messengers, and hardly raised his head to acknowledge their presence. But when they insisted that he must come along with them, he resisted, and finally they had to drag him to the grand review, as amid the amusement and laughter of the crowds, Baldy was shouting: "I will not marry the sultan's daughter! I will not marry the sultan's daughter!"

But imagine the great surprise and consternation of the same crowds when Princess Zainab threw her apple on Baldy as soon as he was dragged past her dais!

For days after, as the city rang with the merriments and hilarities of the royal triple wedding, there was no other subject of conversation among the celebrating citizens than that of the foolish

choice of Princess Zainab, and the possible reason or reasons which prompted her to make it. The sultan was so disgusted with his daughter's conduct, and so ashamed of his ignoble son-in-law that he gave them a modest palace, at quite a distance from the royal one, where they could be soon forgotten by the jeering populace.

A month passed, when suddenly the sultan was taken ill with a strange and mysterious malady. The royal physicians were summoned and after they had put their heads together they solemnly announced that nothing could save the life of his majesty except the milk of lions.

And who, but his own sons-in-law, should volunteer to obtain this rare and difficult medicine for the sultan?

The *grand vizier's* son and the *cadi's* son, mounting each a noble steed, and well provisioned for the road, went on their long search for the sultan's medicine, amid the cheers of the people who had gathered to see them off. But Baldy, Princess Zainab's hapless husband, waiting till his brothers-in-law had disappeared in the distance, sought out an old, worn-out nag, whose lanky bones stuck out from its angular croups and shoulders, and whose ribs could be counted one by one under its scabby



skin. He rode it out backwards through the streets, amid the noisy jeers of the crowds.

But when Clever Hasan was out of the city borders he burned one of the *marid's* hairs, and presently the *marid* appeared before him.

"What may your pleasure be now, my master?" inquired the *marid*, bowing before Clever Hasan.

"Carry me to the Land of Lions," urged Clever Hasan, "and once there I want you to subdue the lions to my command, that I may shepherd them as I would a flock of sheep or goats."

Assuring him that his request was an easy one, the *marid* carried Clever Hasan upon his shoulders and flew with him, and in less than an hour brought him to the Land of Lions.

A word from the *marid* was enough for the lions, who feared him and trembled before his presence. They submitted themselves to Clever Hasan and were as meek with him as little ewes. And Clever Hasan built himself a watch-tower out of willow branches and became a lion's shepherd, grazing the lions and milking the mother-lionesses every day. Then storing the lion's milk in tight skin-bottles he had brought with him for the purpose, he abode his time.

A few weeks passed and then, one day, who

should show up but his two rivals, the *grand vizier's* and the *cadî's* sons? They saw the watch-tower from a distance and made straight for it.

"Peace be upon you, brother," greeted the two royal spouses, who did not recognize Clever Hasan.

"And on you be peace," responded Clever Hasan. "Who are you and what seek you in the Land of Lions?"

"The Land of Lions!" they both ejaculated at once. "Pray, tell us, kind stranger, where can we get some lions' milk?"

"You have hit upon the right man," said Clever Hasan in a matter-of-fact manner. "Verily I trade in lions' milk."

The two sons-in-law of the sultan were elated to hear this and asked the stranger if he could sell them some lions' milk.

"I have none for sale," retorted Clever Hasan. "But if you would let me brand you on your right thighs with my seal, I will let you have as much as you want."

The royal sons-in-law looked at each other and then at the stranger, as much as to say: "Who knows this man back home and what harm can come to us if he does brand us, since no one but ourselves will know of it? So they let him brand them, and

taking their supply of lions' milk, turned the heads of their steeds homeward.

Clever Hasan allowed them enough time to reach home, and, burning another hair, he asked the *marid* to carry him back from where he had first taken him. Then picking up his nag which he had left grazing in a secluded plot of pasture, Clever Hasan rode back to the city in the same way he had ridden out. There were now even more jeers and jibes hurled at the shabby knight and his dilapidated mount, for everybody knew by then that the two gallant sons-in-law of the sultan had already brought back the elixir with which the sultan's health had been restored.

But if all this seemed amusing frolic to Clever Hasan, it was nothing short of mortifying to his wife, Princess Zainab, who, knowing him for what he truly was, and hearing from him the true version of his latest exploit, urged him to reveal himself. But he remonstrated with her, saying that the time had not yet come.

Howbeit, if the time had not come it was not long coming. The sultan had not completely recovered from his illness before a messenger came with disquieting news that a powerful neighboring king had declared war on the sultan.

There was a great hubbub and preparations for the impending war were going on everywhere. Everybody was agitated and excited except Baldy, who stirred not from his home nor seemed to take any interest in all that was taking place around him, much as his wife kept nagging at him to declare himself and assume his true rôle as the brave knight she knew him to be. But he kept putting her off, saying that his time had not yet come.

Then the hostile armies suddenly appeared and the sultan's forces went out to meet them in the plain outside the city. The battle raged and waxed, and the sultan's warriors were hard pressed. Princess Zainab was in tears.

"How long will you wait?" she pleaded with her husband.

But Clever Hasan waited no longer. He went out of the palace, and, riding on the same nag he had ridden before, with his face to the back of the nag, he went through the streets of the city amid the hoots and jeers of the crowds.

And when he was out of sight, beyond the city limits, he whistled for his horse and burned one of the *marid's* hairs. Suddenly the *marid* appeared and bowed.

"Bring me, oh good *marid* of mine, a full armor



Clever Hassan stepped down from his horse and kissed the Sultan's hand.





of jet black and a sword of two edges that would cut a mailed warrior in twain as it would a stalk of hemp."

The *marid* bowed low and disappeared, and in a few minutes more returned with the equipment of war, which Clever Hasan had requested. Then Clever Hasan, putting on his armor, charged on his steed into the middle of the battle affray, just when the sultan's horsemen, headed by the other two sons-in-law of the king, were beating a head-long retreat to the city.

Clever Hasan stopped them, exhorted them to go back, and led the attack. He struck right and left with his brave sword and showed such bravery and skill in battle that the enemy were soon routed and defeat was turned into victory for the sultan's forces.

Now every one was talking about the mysterious black knight, news of whose exploits spread back to the city with lightning swiftness. The king was anxious to see this strange, brave warrior who had saved his kingdom, and he went out with his *viziers* and courtiers to meet him, extend to him the hand of gratitude and bestow on him all the favors due such a brave knight.

And when the victorious army of the sultan,

headed by the black knight, reached the gates of the city, they were met by the sultan himself. Clever Hasan stepped down from his horse and kissed the sultan's hand, while the sultan embraced him.

Tears of gratitude streamed down the sultan's cheeks.

"How can I adequately reward you!" sighed the sultan. "If my youngest daughter had not been married to that worthless dullard Baldy, I would have given her hand in marriage to you, and made you the heir to my sultanate!"

"But I am Baldy himself," replied Clever Hasan with a smile, "and furthermore, it was I who brought you the lions' milk and saved your life." Then, with a sly wink in the direction of the *grand vizier's* and *cadi's* sons, he added: ". . . and if you don't believe it ask your two sons-in-law."

The sultan's sons-in-law, taken by surprise at this turn of affairs, looked at each other with stupefied amazement and hastened to nod their confirmation of Clever Hasan's claim.

Then Clever Hasan told the sultan the story of his own life from its beginning up to the present.

There was great rejoicing in the sultan's realm that day. The sultan decreed that a double celebration be held, one in honor of the brilliant victory

which Clever Hasan secured by his bravery, and the other to compensate for the wedding festivities which should have been his. For forty days and forty nights no one ate and no one drank save at the sultan's tables. And when the festivities were over, the sultan declared Clever Hasan his rightful heir, and not long after, when the sultan died, Clever Hasan became sultan in his place, and he lived with his wife, Queen Zainab, happy ever after. And the Talking Horse also lived in the royal stable as near to his master as could be, and Clever Hasan would visit him every day, and the two would hold long conversations, when nobody else was around listening; and they would chuckle over the merry experiences they had together.

## THE JUDGMENT OF KARAKOUSH

**I**F the despots of the East are notorious for their arbitrary oppression, injustice and fickle caprice, then certainly Karakoush, the governor of Cairo in the days of the great Saladin, was the most notorious of them all. His name has come down in Syria as a by-word and a symbol for all that is arbitrary and unjust. "Like the judgment of Karakoush" is a proverb current in Syria to-day, epitomizing all that is capricious and unreasonable, sometimes so much so, that it becomes ludicrous, as in the following story:

It is related that a thief in the governorship of Karakoush broke into a house to steal. He climbed the wall and came to a window which he tried to pry open. But the window frame, being weak, suddenly gave way and the thief fell into the house and broke his leg.

On the next day the thief, wobbling on his sound leg, appeared before Karakoush and, showing his broken leg to the governor, said:

"Your Excellency, I am a thief by profession. Yesterday I entered the house of so-and-so, and, as

I was prying the window open, it caved in and I fell and broke my leg."

Karakoush shouted to the court guards to bring the owner of the house before him, and presently the owner of the house, trembling with fear and agitation, not knowing the nature of the charge against him, was dragged before the governor, who repeated the charge of the thief, adding:

"Why did you make your window so loose that it caved in and caused this thief to break his leg?"

What answer could the owner of the house make to such a charge? and since when had thieves rights for redress or claims for damages in any Moslem court? But the man knew better than to argue with Karakoush. He thought for a moment, then turning to the governor, said:

"Your Excellency, it was no fault of mine that the window of my house was not constructed right, or that it was put loosely in place. I swear by your precious head that I paid the carpenter sufficiently to make me a window strong enough to prevent such an accident as befell this hapless thief."

"Bring the carpenter, then," commanded Karakoush with a thundering voice.

And when the carpenter appeared, the governor sternly addressed him, saying:

“This house owner asserts that he paid you sufficiently to construct him a strong window. Why then did you construct so weak a one that this poor thief broke his leg when he tried to pry it open?”

The carpenter's face turned pale at this sudden and quite unexpected accusation. But he, too, knew how useless it was to argue with Karakoush, so after a little hesitation, he said:

“Your Excellency, it was not my fault that the window frame was not fastened properly. I was driving a nail when a certain beautiful young lady with a red dress passed under the window, and the nail was driven a-slant in the frame.”

Ascertaining who the young lady was, Karakoush commanded that she, in turn, be brought before him.

When the young lady appeared, the governor repeated the charge of the carpenter, adding that if it had not been for her beauty and her red dress, the carpenter would not have been distracted, the window would not have been loosely constructed and the poor thief would not have broken his leg.

To this the young lady answered with a smile: “My beauty is from Allah, but my red dress is from the dyer. It was he who dyed it red and made me distract the carpenter.”





“My beauty is from Allah, but my red dress is from the dyer.”



"Then bring the dyer hither," persisted Governor Karakoush in his pursuit of absolute justice.

A few minutes later the dyer also stood trembling and perplexed before the awful Karakoush.

"Oh miscreant dabbler in dyes," cried the wrathful governor, "why did you dye this young lady's dress red that she attracted the attention of the carpenter, that he drove the nail a-slant and caused a weakness in the window frame, that this thief broke his leg when he tried to pry it open?"

The poor dyer stood speechless and stunned with bewilderment. He stammered one excuse or another, but none appealed to the relentless governor, who finally shouted out:

"Take this fellow and hang him at the door of the prison!"

Now the dyer happened to be an extraordinarily tall fellow, and when the soldiers took him to hang him at the door of the prison, they found that the door was too low, allowing no space for the rope. So they hurried back to the governor and told him that they could not hang the dyer because he was too tall for the prison door.

But Karakoush, not to be daunted so easily, bel-  
lowed out to the terrified soldiers:

"Go out and look for a short dyer and hang him in the place of this one!"

The soldiers clicked their heels together, saluted the exalted governor, and promptly went out to search for a short dyer. They stopped not till they found one, whom they dragged, without listening to his wild protests and pleadings, and hanged him on the door of the prison.

## THE FABLE OF THE LION AND THE BULL

**I**N one of the vast, thick jungles of India, a lion held sway over a large kingdom of animals of prey. Among his subjects were the tiger, the panther, the hyena, the wolf, the jackals, and numberless other animals. They all lived in harmony, for all feared the lion and obeyed his orders without question, and he was a just and severe lion.

In this peaceful, contented community there also were two jackals, one called Kalila, the other Dimna. The latter of the two was a cunning, aspiring, jealous animal, who seemed to have inherited all the evil traits of his kind and none of its virtues. How this jackal was the cause of estranging two bosom friends, and by his unscrupulous ambition brought about the first tragedy in the jungle which also cost him his own life, we shall presently see. But Kalila was a wiser and more contented jackal.

It happened this way. Once upon a time in the history of our jungle community a bull, who had been drawing a cart on a road not far from the jungle, stuck in the mud, and as it was growing

dark, he was left in haste and fear by his owners. On the next morning the bull extricated himself and strayed on the grass-covered land on the outskirts of the jungle. And when the bull was full and had grown fat, he began to bellow with all his might, until his voice shook the jungle with its reverberation. The lion, not having ever met a bull before and judging only from its loud voice, imagined it to be a huge, ferocious beast. He trembled in fear and consternation every time he heard the bull bellow, and no longer left his cave, as was his wont, to lead his subjects in hunting expeditions. He pretended that he was ill, and his food was brought to him daily by the other beasts. But the cunning jackal, Dimna, noticed the lion's fear and his suspicions were aroused. He would not rest till he knew the real cause of the lion's behavior. So one day when he and Kalila were together, Dimna asked his brother:

“Wherefore does the lion always keep to his cave, not moving hither or thither, nor taking any interest in the hunt?”

And Kalila answered: “What business have you to ask such a question? We are at the gate of our king, choosing what pleases him, and leaving alone what he forbids. Nor are we of those whose station



is high, and whose words are listened to by kings. Withhold, therefore, from your questioning lest the fate befall you that befell the monkey who meddled with the business of the carpenter."

And Dimna asked: "What was that?"

And Kalila related: "A carpenter was splitting a log into planks with a saw and every time he split a cubit's length he inserted a wedge. And there sat opposite him a monkey who was observing what he did. At noon-time the carpenter left his work and went to have his midday meal; and no sooner had he gone than the monkey jumped over the log of wood and tried to imitate him. He turned his face to the wedge and began to work it loose as his tail sank in the cleft of the log. When the wedge was removed the boards snapped on the monkey's tail, which made him howl with pain till the carpenter came back and administered to him a beating, even more painful than what he had received from the log."

And Dimna answered: "What you say, brother, is true in a way. But the truly ambitious ones do not seek material favors or worldly gains for themselves only, but aspire rather to benefit their immediate folks with them. There are those who are satisfied with little things, like a dog who wags his

tail gladly when he beholds a dry bone; but the people of ambition and character are not to be easily satisfied. Their souls aspire to what is their proper station. They are like the lion who, having hunted a rabbit, sees a camel at a distance; he immediately lets go of the rabbit and goes after the camel."

But Kalila was not so sanguine or ambitious as his brother, and he held a different view. Said he in answer to Dimna's argument: "Verily, every man has his station and worth foreordained for him. Struggle as he may, no one can go beyond the circle of destiny."

In spite of all the arguments of Kalila, however, Dimna, sensing an opportunity in his knowledge of the lion's secret, had set his mind to use it as a means to gain favor and high station with the lion.

So he went straight to the lion, and approaching him, bowed low before his majesty, touching the ground with his forehead. Then he raised his face, and the king motioned him to arise, and asked him who he was and what his purpose was in coming before him. Then Dimna boldly replied:

"I am but one of the humble servants of the king who station themselves at his gate. For it is said that at the doors of the kings there is always need of some humble service; and none there is who is

too humble or small but may be of some use or service to the king."

The lion was pleased with the eloquence of Dimna and motioned him to draw near and kiss his forepaw as a token of being received into his service.

One day, as the lion had gradually taken confidence in Dimna, the two were left alone; and Dimna made bold to ask the lion why he had not moved from his place for a long time, contrary to his custom, although he was the sole and supreme ruler of the jungle, and there was none around who dared challenge his authority or do combat with him. While Dimna was speaking thus the bull bellowed, and Dimna noticed that the lion trembled, and his lower lip twitched a little. Dimna lost no time, but straightway asked the lion:

"Is it, oh king, *this* voice that frightens you?"

And the lion admitted that it was, adding: "If my calculation does not deceive me the animal that has this voice must be so great and powerful that we must either move from this jungle, or else I must meet him in combat."

And Dimna answered wisely: "Voices are no indication of power, for the drum makes a lot of noise but when you cut it open, behold, it is empty and powerless."

Then Dimna assured the lion that he would go personally to find out the source of this voice and come back and tell him about it. The lion consented, and Dimna went and presently came back saying that the voice came from a bull, who was not at all as powerful as the king imagined.

"On the contrary," the jackal related, "I challenged him to a duel and held my own with him."

"Be not deceived," retorted the lion, "the strong wind passes harmlessly over the soft, low grass, but it breaks asunder the mighty trees."

But Dimna volunteered to go and bring the bull before the lion and force him to do obeisance unto him. The lion was pleased with this proposition and so Dimna went again to the bull, and approaching him, nodded and said:

"Wherefore, oh grass-eating animal, have you not shown yourself before the lion? He has been greatly annoyed and disturbed by your ugly bel-lowing. Had it not been for me he would have long ago meted a proper punishment for you."

And the bull, feeling that he had unwittingly committed some great wrong, asked the jackal who the lion was, and apologized profusely for offending him unknowingly.

The jackal informed the bull that the lion was

the king of the beasts, and that all the jungle and what is around it is his rightful kingdom.

"Then what shall I do?" asked the bull.

"Come with me," said Dimna, "and I will intercede on your behalf before him."

So the two went to the lion, who was anxiously pacing his cave back and forth. What if the jackal betrayed him to the bull? What if the bull haughtily turned down the invitation of the jackal?

But the lion's misgivings faded when he saw the bull and Dimna approaching together. Then the jackal, with a flourish of eloquence, introduced the bull to the lion, offering the former's submission to the king of the beasts. The bull bowed in assent. And the lion in turn greeted him kindly saying: "If you accompany me you will not want for hospitality and honor."

And the lion took a fancy to the bull and they became great friends. The bull and lion were henceforth inseparable, so sincere and deep was their friendship.

As for Dimna, he was not so pleased with this new friendship and envied the bull in his heart, for the lion had now completely neglected Dimna.

Then Dimna went with a sad face to his brother Kalila, and the latter, noting his gloomy state, said:

“What now, why the long face, brother, have you not realized your life’s ambition?”

And Dimna sadly related to his brother Kalila what had taken place and how the lion had given up his companionship for that of the bull, adding:

“I seek not now to enhance my station with the lion, but only to restore my former one. And I see no way to it except with the removal of that herbivorous animal, the bull. Henceforth I shall not rest until I separate the bull from the lion’s life, and who knows but that may be for the good of the lion himself?”

“Your scheming against the bull,” said Kalila, “might avail you aught, had he not combined with the gift of might the subtle quality of foresight, without which he could not have retained the envied friendship of the king to this day. How then will you cope against this double handicap?”

Dimna replied: “I will do with him as the rabbit did with a certain lion.”

“And how was that?” asked Kalila.

And Dimna said: “It is related that once there was a lion in a meadow rich in pasturage and streams. In the same meadow lived a number of beasts to whom, however, the tempting grass and running water was of little benefit, for they feared



the lion and never felt secure of their lives in the meadow. So, one day, they went to the lion and offered him a plan whereby they would safeguard their own security, and the lion himself be none the loser for the bargain. They told him that only with much effort and many hardships does he succeed in catching one of them, but if he should pledge them his word not to disturb them, they would of their own accord bring him each day a beast for his mid-day meal. The lion accepted the plan and concluded a peace with the beasts, who fulfilled their promise to him faithfully.

“Now, one day the lot fell on the rabbit to be delivered to the lion, and the rabbit said: ‘If you listen to me and do as I tell you, I will relieve you of the lion for good.’

“‘And how would you accomplish that?’ asked the beasts. And the rabbit told them that all she asked was to have the beast who conveyed her to the lion dally purposely on the way, and she would do the rest. This was agreed to by the beasts, and when the rabbit came near to where the lion was expecting her, she told her escort to leave her alone, while she proceeded slowly to the lion. And when the rabbit came up to the lion, who had become peeved and ill-tempered with hunger, he

roared as he moved toward her, asking where she came from, and what was the cause of her delay.

“The rabbit made bold to answer: ‘I am the messenger of the beasts to your majesty, and was sent by them with another rabbit for your dinner. But on the way we were met by a lion who asked us where we were going, and when we told him, he cursed you, saying that he was the true ruler of this meadow, and the rabbit belonged by rights to him. And then I hastened to inform you of what happened.’

“On hearing this the lion was blind with rage.

“‘Where is the other lion? Lead me to him,’ roared the king of the meadow, ‘I will soon show him who is the rightful king here.’

“‘Gladly,’ said the rabbit, and led the way, until she brought him to a well of clear water, and pointing down, she said: ‘There he is!’

“The lion looked down and saw his own shadow and that of the rabbit in the water. With one growl he leaped into the well and was immediately killed.

“And that is how, Oh brother of mine, did a mere rabbit contrive to kill a mighty lion, and in some such way do I hope to get rid of the bull.”

In vain did Kalila try to dissuade his brother Dimna. For every argument that Kalila brought

forth to turn his brother's mind from the perilous path of unscrupulous ambition, Dimna, with his glib tongue and ready wit, was quick to furnish a counter argument. So finally Kalila gave up all attempt, and committed Dimna to the folly of his stubborn way.

Then Dimna absented himself from the lion for a whole week, and choosing a time when the lion was alone, he approached him with a serious, troubled mien.

"Where have you been all this time?" began the lion, "and why are you so changed? What is the matter now?"

"Matter enough, Oh king," said the wily jackal.

"And what is that?" asked the lion.

"Something has happened," Dimna affirmed, "which neither your majesty, nor any of your loyal servants would be pleased to hear. Horrible words have been uttered which one loathes to hear and dares not repeat. But when I reflect that we, the beasts of the jungle, are all as bound to you as your slaves, ready to do your bidding and that our very existence depends on you I cannot refrain from advising you of what has happened."

The lion was moved to curiosity by these words and wished to know more, so Dimna continued:

"I have been told by a true and faithful friend that the bull took aside the heads of your army and the dignitaries of your kingdom and said to them that he had tried your strength and found you weak and wanting in wisdom, and that some day he will settle with you. When I heard this, oh king, I knew that the bull is a despicable traitor, who deserves nothing less than to be killed; for the wise ones said that when a king discovers that one of his subjects has equalled him in station or wealth let him remove him away lest he himself be removed."

To this the lion answered: "I cannot believe that the bull has deceived me so basely, nor has he any incentive for such a treachery. He has seen no evil from me; rather I have shown him every good treatment and consideration."

And Dimna answered: "A base fellow remains serviceable and faithful to his superiors until he is raised to a station which he does not deserve, which he no sooner attains than he aspires to a higher one. Neither does he serve the king except out of fear or need. Remove these and he returns to his base element."

"You have spoken harshly of the bull," put in the lion. "Furthermore, the bull cannot do me any

harm. He is an eater of grass, while I am a beast of prey. If any one should fear, it is the bull who should fear me, for he is food to me."

"If you fear not the bull," pressed Dimna, "fear then others of your subjects whom the bull seeks to incite against you."

In such wise did Dimna insinuate and reason against the bull that at last the lion was convinced by his words and anxiously asked:

"What shall I do?"

And Dimna replied: "There is no medicine for an aching tooth but to remove it."

Then the lion suggested that he was going to send for the bull and expose his guilt on the spot.

Dimna was not pleased with this suggestion. He warned the lion that such a step would place the bull on his guard.

"Wise kings," said Dimna, "never declare punishment before guilt is established. If, however, the bull shows signs of his evil intent, then be you on your guard, your majesty, lest he attack you first."

"And what are these signs?" asked the lion.

And Dimna replied: "When you see his joints shake, his horns levelled in a menacing manner, and he looks to the right and left, know then, Oh king, that he is preparing to fight you."

And when Dimna was through with inciting the lion against the bull, he proceeded to the bull and entered with a sad and downcast face, as he had done with the lion.

The bull welcomed Dimna, and as he noticed the change in his face he enquired: "Is it peace, my brother Dimna? Why have you kept yourself away from me so long?"

And Dimna answered cunningly: "How could it be peace with one whose life is in the hands of another, and who is, therefore, ever surrounded with danger? How could one be vouchsafed continuance of peace and munificence who lives in the shadow of the king?"

The bull asked: "Has the lion done anything to arouse your suspicion?"

And Dimna replied: "Verily he has, but not to me. I need not remind you of the strong friendship which has sprung between you and me since the lion sent me to fetch you to him. From that time on you have become a favorite friend of the lion, and I withheld myself as much as possible from his presence, lest I be in the way as an undesirable intruder. I have no doubt that the lion was sincere in his friendship for you, but I need not hide from you a fact well known in the jungle,



namely that the lion is weak-willed, as easily persuaded by his enemies as by his friends. Nor need I hide from you, furthermore, that your friendship with the lion has aroused bitter envy and jealousy among those who are nearest to him.

"I have heard," continued Dimna, "from a true and faithful friend, that these jealous courtiers of the lion have persuaded him to do away with you, since you are a stranger, a herbivorous animal, unfit for anything in the jungle but to be devoured. And the lion, despite his good intentions, has decided to sacrifice you for the pleasure of his friends."

The bull could not but be persuaded by this well-prepared and reasoned speech of the jackal.

"And what shall I do?" asked the bull.

"Do not wait until you are attacked first," confided Dimna.

"But how will I know for sure that the lion has harbored evil intent against me that I may be on my guard?"

And Dimna replied: "You will know that when you see him sitting on his haunches, his chest thrown out, his fiery eyes fixing you, his ears pricked and his mouth opened, ready to bounce on you and devour you."

Thus did Dimna sow the seeds of discord between the lion and the bull, and changed their friendship to enmity. Then he went to his brother Kalila and told him how his plan to remove the bull had succeeded even beyond his expectations, and the two went to witness from a safe distance the anticipated fight between the two mighty beasts of the jungle.

Presently the bull went as usual to visit the lion, and as he entered he noticed the lion sitting on his haunches, and noticed the other signs of which Dimna had warned him. The bull was shaking with fear and had levelled his horns in an attitude of self-defense. The lion, not doubting that the bull was making ready to attack him, attacked the bull first, and a lively battle followed, in which the bull was killed and the lion badly wounded.

But the lion repented afterward of killing the bull. He became morose and melancholic, and would eat very little. His courtiers knew the cause of his sorrow, and doubted in their hearts the sincerity of Dimna. They suspected the jackal to be the villain behind this tragedy, but they dared not introduce the subject before the king. In the first place they had no direct evidence against Dimna, and, furthermore, they knew that the wily jackal could always outwit them in legalistic sophistry.

But there was one beast who never liked the jackal, and had courage enough to defy him to his face. This beast was none other than the mother of the king. She was positively convinced of Dimna's treachery and lost no opportunity to denounce him to her son. But she, too, had no direct evidence against the jackal, and she knew that the king was too just to condemn a beast on mere suspicion.

This evidence, however, was not long forthcoming, and it was in this wise: One night, late after midnight, the tiger, who had been keeping the lion company, was walking alone back to his lair. And as he passed by the den of Kalila and Dimna he heard a heated conversation and stopped to listen. Kalila was reprimanding Dimna severely for the evil deed he had done in causing the death of the bull, and bringing so much sorrow to the king.

The tiger did not wait until the morning, but went straight to the mother lioness and told her all he had heard, extracting from her a promise not to tell it to any one.

The next morning the lioness entered upon her son and found him sad and disconsolate as usual.

"What makes you so sad, my soul?" she asked. "Is it not the death of the bull?"

The lion nodded, too sad to speak.

"If your conscience is clear in this matter," went

on the mother lioness, "why fret, then, and be consumed with sorrow? But I see, indeed, that your conscience is not clear. Does it not rebuke you and point its finger of accusation against you, telling you that you killed the bull unjustly?"

The lion sadly replied: "For truth, mother, my conscience has not ceased rebuking me since I killed the bull, and it has ever told me that he was innocent."

Then the mother lioness said: "The best accuser of one's self is his own self." Then she rebuked him for killing the bull on mere suspicion and hearsay, and that from an animal who is infamous among all the beasts of the jungle for his meanness and cunning. Then she added that she had evidence, clear enough, to incriminate the evil jackal, but being bound by honor she could not divulge a secret imparted to her by another. Then the lion insisted that she tell him the secret, saying: "The one who imparted it to you could not mean otherwise than that it reach my ears. Tell it, therefore, to me."

At last the mother lioness said: "So be it. It is far more wrong to let a guilty one go free than to disclose a confidence." Then she related to her son the conversation which the tiger had overheard between Kalila and Dimna.

And on the next day the soldiers of the king surrounded the house of Kalila and Dimna and led the wily schemer before the lion and his court. The lion drooped his head. And Dimna looked around nonchalantly and asked: "What has happened, your most gracious majesty?"

The mother lioness replied: "It grieves the king that you are still alive."

"And what have I done?" asked Dimna, in all innocence.

"Your scheming and treachery in the death of the bull have become evident to the king," retorted the mother lioness.

But Dimna was not to be nonplussed or confounded with the caustic remarks of the mother lioness. He defended himself valiantly and cleverly and in his defense said that one cannot expect justice in this world; therefore have ascetics chosen to live in the wilderness. Then he cautioned the lion lest in his haste he might repent his death, as he was repenting the death of the bull.

After this the lion commanded that the jackal be taken to prison to await further light on his case. For the testimony of one was not sufficient to condemn one to death.

Now when Dimna was taken to prison Kalila

came to him in the middle of the night, and when he saw how his brother was bound behind the prison bars, he wept and said: "Have I not warned you that the end of deceit is evil? Look now to what state you have come."

Dimna replied: "Your words are true, and I am now sorry when sorrow can avail nothing. Nevertheless, we should not lose all hope."

Now Kalila and Dimna had thought that they were alone, but in a dark cell next to Dimna was a leopard confined on the same day for some offense.

The next day the leopard sent a word to the lion, divulging all that he had heard pass between Kalila and Dimna.

There was no more doubt now of Dimna's guilt. The tiger and the leopard testified before the court of the king, who now was thoroughly convinced of the jackal's villainy.

He ordered that Dimna be taken immediately and hanged, then his corpse be taken down and paraded in the jungle, a lesson to all deceitful, treacherous beasts.



## THE TAIL OF ST. GEORGE'S DRAGON

FATHER HANNA was a simple, God-fearing curate in a little Christian village of Lebanon. He had been a shoemaker, and because he was the only one of the elder residents of the village who could read and write, he was taken from behind his last and ordained to the priesthood. The limit of his clerical learning, however, was reached with the recitation of the liturgy, the *pater noster* and the *credo*. But he was prone to exaggeration, which made up for his deficiency in theology, and often left a vivid impression on his pious congregation.

Now the *shaykh* of the village had a brilliant son, Elias, who was sent by his parents to a boarding school in Beirut. And when Elias came back for his summer vacations, Father Hanna noticed that he never attended church, albeit when he was younger, before he had gone to the boarding school, he had been a constant attendant, and always served the mass.

The priest was grieved at heart at the retrogression of the lad, not only for the sake of his soul's

salvation but because of the lad's example before the other boys of the village.

So one day, Father Hanna accosted Elias on the street, and, cornering him so he could not escape, remonstrated with him warmly.

"My son," said the priest, "why don't you come to mass any more? I fear learning has turned you into an infidel. Don't you know that to miss mass is a sin for which God will punish you in purgatory?"

The youth made one excuse after another, only to be met by a silencing argument from the priest. At last he blurted out:

"To tell you the truth, Father, I don't go to church any more because I cannot stand your exaggerations!"

"Is *that* all, my son?" replied Father Hanna meekly.

"Bless your heart, my son, you know that I never went to any school but that of the village under the oak tree, and my father took me to help him in the shop when I was hardly eleven years of age. If I exaggerate, it is in good faith, for I know no better. Why don't you come to church and give me a hint when I exaggerate so I may correct myself?"

The young man gladly accepted the suggestion of the priest, and on the following Sunday went to church and took a seat in the very first row, just in front of the sacristy. And it happened that it was St. George's day and Father Hanna took for his sermon the story of St. George and the dragon. And thus began:

"Blessed children, what shall I tell you, about St. George's dragon? Its tail alone was as long as from here to Egypt." Then peering at Elias he heard him give the signal agreed upon, "ahem!" So the priest retrieved himself.

—"And if we do not say from here to Egypt, then from here to Gaza."

Again Elias muttered, "ahem!"

—"And if we do not say from here to Gaza, then from here to Jerusalem."

—"Ahem!"

—"And, if we do not say from here to Jerusalem, then from here to Beirut."

—"Ahem!"

—"And if we do not say from here to Beirut, then from here to Juneh."

—"Ahem!"

But Father Hanna had reached the limits of his patience and under no consideration was he willing to reduce the dragon's tail any more.

He leaned forward, peering significantly at Elias, and in a gesture of resignation with out-turned palms, he said:

“My son, do you want St. George’s dragon to be without a tail? So be it then, without a tail!”

## THE GOLDEN CITY OF IRAM

**I**N the heart of the great Arabian desert, amid the endless waves of the sea of sand, hidden from the eyes of man by a magic spell, stands, so legend says, the wonder city of Iram, all built of gold, silver and precious stones.

Once upon a time, long before the days of the Prophet Mohammed, a mighty king by the name of Aad ruled all Arabia with an iron hand. King Aad had two sons, Shadid and Shaddad, and when he passed away he left his kingdom to them, and they ruled it together until Shadid died and Shaddad was left to rule it alone.

King Shaddad was a proud and haughty tyrant and reigned according to his whims and caprices, with no thought for the good of his subjects. Like all tyrants he was intensely selfish. He considered the great kingdom in which his will was law as his personal property and its people as his slaves. A mighty conqueror, King Shaddad waged war against the neighboring kings of Syria and Persia, subdued their countries with vast armies, and in the course of time reigned over a kingdom which

stretched from the borders of India to the Mediterranean Sea, and from the Indian Ocean to the Mountain of Kaf. The kingdoms which lay behind his dominions feared him, and their kings paid him tribute, and thus he became not only the mightiest but the wealthiest king on earth.

Then of the pride of King Shaddad's heart there was born an impious and godless desire. In the ancient books he had heard of the joys of the City of Paradise, with its golden streets, its gates of lustrous pearls, its crystal rivers which ran singing beneath trees whose leaves were ever green, and the like of whose fruits men never tasted on earth. "Let Allah have His Paradise in heaven," thought King Shaddad. "I shall make me a Paradise as good as His on earth!"

And so he sent for his viziers and the great lords of his realms and when they were assembled and had bowed before him in the dust he said to them:

"In the sacred books of olden times I have read descriptions of Paradise, Allah's golden city of the clouds, through which run crystal rivers which sing as they flow. I have made up my mind that such a city shall be mine to have and enjoy here on earth and during my mortal life. For though Allah be mighty in heaven, I, King Shaddad, am mighty on



earth, and who has a better right to know the joys of Paradise on earth than I?"

A chill of awe and terror ran over the great assembly of King Shaddad's courtiers when they heard him utter these blasphemies. They glanced at one another with fear and amazement, half expecting to see Allah strike the impious monarch dead upon his throne. But they dared not murmur or protest and listened in silence as King Shaddad spoke again:

"It is my will, therefore, that scouts be sent out to every part of my kingdom to select the spot best fitted to be this site of my Paradise. And when the site has been found, then laborers and skilled artisans of every kind must at once be sent there to build a city the like of which no human eye ever has seen. It must be a city raised on marble pillars and surrounded by a mighty wall. Its palaces and streets must be covered with gold and silver and studded with precious stones."

Then the viziers and great lords went forth from King Shaddad's palace and began to busy themselves carrying out his commands. Scouts were sent out in every direction to find a site worthy of the Golden City, and when they returned they reported that the ideal spot was in the very heart of

the Arabian desert. It was a fertile plain where clear rivers flowed and where every variety of fruit and shade tree flourished; a green oasis hedged off and isolated from the rest of the world by the vast seas of sand which surrounded it on every side. King Shaddad listened to their report and was pleased with their choice, and at once messengers rode to all parts of his kingdom to collect the materials needed to build the Golden City, which was called "Iram, the City of Pillars."

For full ten years materials were collected through King Shaddad's realm and for ten years great caravans of camels toiled endlessly through the burning sands bringing them to the laborers and artisans who worked without ceasing to build the Golden City. With tinkling bells the caravans brought loads of precious freight to the oasis where the city was taking shape: gold, silver, marble, sandalwood, aloes, pine and gems of every size and color. Every land that made up Shaddad's great kingdom yielded up its choicest treasures. Yellow gold came from the mines of *Ophir* and green gold from the Indian rivers. On Mount Lebanon the woodman's axe laid low the giant cedars, and along the coast of Malabar armed horsemen fought the huge termite ants to collect the fragrant *sandal-*

*wood*. Indian *rajahs* and Persian kings emptied their jewel-caskets at King Shaddad's command, and in the Persian Gulf his slaves dared the tentacles of the huge squids that hid in the shadow of the undersea banks to dive for pearls, white and pink.

And as the materials were collected and sent to the oasis, King Shaddad's engineers and artisans labored at the building of Iram, the City of Pillars, and they labored for twenty years with never a stop until the Golden City at last rose in its perfected beauty. Never was there a city on earth to equal it. Its streets were paved with stones covered with silver, and the branches of fruit and shade trees overhung the singing waters as they flowed.

The palaces of the Golden City were raised on pillars of rosy granite and snowy marble, and themselves were built of semi-precious stones held together with gold and silver bands and inlaid with pearls and jewels. And every palace was joyous with the soul of living waters, which ran, sang and murmured in open conduits, and in pipes and basins of silver and marble, and were borne along from one chamber to another, to break out suddenly in crystalline dancing jets in sunlit courts or roofed fountains. And all about the Golden City rose a

huge wall whose towering ramparts were broken every three hundred cubits by great castle-towers. And in all this huge wall there was but a single entrance gate, wrought of massive iron covered with plates of gold. Skilled artisans had inlaid the golden surface of the great gate with scenes picturing the great deeds of King Shaddad and his father, King Aad, in a mosaic of quartz crystals, rubies, emeralds and tourmalines. Beneath these figures was a legend in Arabic letters, all formed of large pearls, which ran: "King Shaddad, the Mighty, the Glorious, King of Kings, whose Rule is Supreme on Earth, has Built the Golden City of Iram, the Earthly Paradise, so that He may enjoy on Earth the Bliss that Allah enjoys in Heaven!"

And when the Golden City was finally completed, when every last stone was in place and every last jewel had been inlaid in its palace walls, King Shaddad set out with a long retinue of his viziers, his great lords and a bodyguard of picked men to make his solemn entry into it. For days the huge caravans crept along the burning yellow sands, and while the silver camel-bells tinkled their monotonous tune, King Shaddad in his cushioned litter dreamt proud dreams of happiness. He was going to take possession of Iram, the City of Pil-

lars, the Golden City, the Earthly Paradise whose creation almost had made him equal to Allah Himself! And as that splendid caravan moved over the sea of sand, a glorious, glittering spectacle, not a soul among those who composed it, from King Shaddad himself down to the least of his half-naked camel drivers, gave a thought to the wrath of Allah, may His name be glorified, and blessed be those who bend the knee of humility before His omnipotence!

At last the great caravan drew near the Golden City and the horses tossed their heads and the camels stretched their necks as they scented the sweet waters of the oasis and realized that at last they were at their journey's end.

And then, at the very moment when the travelers were in sight of the glorious walls and towers of Iram, the City of Pillars, the skies began to frown and enormous black clouds cast their threatening shadows across the sands. Without a moment's warning, with the Golden City still sparkling before their enraptured eyes, suddenly the heavens opened, and with a crash as though the world were coming to an end, a tremendous shower of stones and fire fell from the skies and buried the great caravan in the twinkling of an eye. Not one

soul of all King Shaddad's great following, including the impious king himself, lived to enter the Golden City, or to tell the tale of the terrible disaster which had overwhelmed them. And from that day on Allah hid away Iram, the Golden City, from the sight of man. Once only, during all the centuries which have passed, has the foot of a mortal trodden its silver streets. For Allah had decreed that the Golden City of Iram shall be visible only to the man in whose heart dwelt no guile or selfishness.

Uways al-Karani, an early Mohammedan ascetic and a contemporary of the Prophet of Mohammed, was that man, if ever one existed. To him it was vouchsafed to see the Golden City of Iram for the first and only time after it had been hidden away from the sight of human eye. Uways was an upright and pious man, altogether given up to good works. He spared no thought for himself but lived only for the glory of Allah on Whom he placed his sole reliance.

One day when Uways al-Karani was wandering in the desert, lost in pious contemplation, he happened to raise his eyes and, lo and behold, there before him stood the Golden City of Iram, risen in all its radiant beauty out of the glowing yellow sands.



Uways al-Karani recognized it at once, for he had often read about it in the Koran, and often had wondered where Allah might have hidden it away. Always Uways al-Karani had yearned to see the Golden City of Iram. It was the great secret wish of his heart, and now Allah had rewarded his faithful servant and granted him his heart's desire. No longer would it be necessary for Uways to murmur to himself with a sigh: "If I could but once see Iram, the Golden City, before I am called away from this earth! What would I not give to gladden my eyes for one brief moment with the earthly pattern of the heavenly Paradise which awaits the true believers!"

For Iram, the City of Pillars, rose before him, its towering palaces gleaming and glittering in the sun, and Uways al-Karani flung himself on the sands and before he entered the silent city praised Allah for this rare and singular favor. As he passed through the jewelled gate his eyes were dazzled by the beauty surrounding him on every side. Never, not even in his most fantastic dreams, had he imagined that earth held such a vision of splendor and riches. Everywhere the stone pavements he trod were adorned and inset with gold and silver; and pearls as large as pigeons' eggs were strewn about

the streets like pebbles. Uways al-Karani looked about him in awe-struck amazement. And blinded by all the wealth which surrounded him, an evil thought, alas, entered his heart—and he spoke it aloud: “Surely there would be no harm in picking up some of the pearls and jewels which lie carelessly scattered about on every side, and keeping them for myself? Allah certainly would not begrudge them to me and would not be offended if I took them. For I would not gather a quantity of them in order to become rich, but just a few, to keep as a remembrance of the hidden wonder-city of the sands which mine has been the first eye to gaze on since King Shaddad carried its vision with him to death!”

So spoke Uways al-Karani, and as he spoke bent down and picked up a lustrous cream-colored pearl which lay at his feet.

Alas, as his hand closed on the pearl, Iram the Golden City disappeared as suddenly as it had appeared to him! The moment before, Uways al-Karani had been standing on the silver pavement under the graceful shade of a giant sycamore tree that rose on the bank of a singing crystal stream. Now the hot desert sand burned beneath his sandaled feet, and about him stretched the endless



Iram the Golden City disappeared as suddenly as it had appeared to him.



desert wastes. And Uways al-Karani looked at the pearl he still held in his hand and behold! it had turned into a common, ordinary pebble.

Since that day, though many have sought it, no man has ever seen the Golden City of Iram again. Somewhere amid the yellow desert sands it stands as it has stood through the ages, waiting for the only seeker who will be able to see it—the man in whose heart no guile or selfishness abides!

## OUJ, THE SON OF ANAK

**O**UJ, the son of Anak, may the peace of Allah rest on his soul as the clouds rest on the summit of *Mt. Sunnin*, was a huge giant who lived in the days of Noah. So tall was he that when the flood came it reached only to his knees.

When he wanted to eat, he would thrust his hand into the sea, take out a fish and bake it in the rays of the sun.

When he walked he stepped over tall trees as an ordinary man would step over the weeds and herbs of the fields. In a few steps he would reach from town to town.

Lakes and rivers were no obstacles in his way. The deepest rivers did not reach to his ankle and hardly a lake reached to his knee.

That is how tall Ouj, the son of Anak, was.

Three hundred cubits to an inch was his height!

One day pride entered the heart of this giant. He looked up to heaven and haughtily addressed the Almighty God:

“Oh God, is there any one greater than I?”

And God answered him saying:



"Be humble, Oh Ouj! There are many servants of Mine who are much greater than you."

Ouj bowed his head in humility. He was dejected, for he had always thought he was the tallest and greatest giant living.

And Ouj, the son of Anak, would not rest until he met some one who was greater than he.

So he walked in the length and breadth of the earth.

Days and months passed, but Ouj met nobody greater than he. All he met were ordinary men who, when they saw him from a distance, fled before him, fearing lest he step on them inadvertently and crush them to death.

But one day, as the sun was sinking beyond the western horizon, Ouj came upon a queer looking object—a hill in the shape of a man's foot. He was tired, so he sat in its shade to rest and soon fell asleep.

It was a cold night and Ouj could not sleep long. He got up and walked a few steps and suddenly came upon a huge cave. He entered it to shelter himself from the cold of the night.

Ouj felt his way in that cave, which was unusually warm. He nestled between two huge stones and fell asleep again.

Early the next morning Ouj was awakened by a violent commotion, an earthquake it seemed, which violently ejected him from the cave.

He did not know what it was. He rubbed his eyes in fright and saw the mountain before him move. Then it stood up. For behold! It was not a mountain at all, but an extremely huge giant.

With much difficulty did Ouj make his presence known to that giant. He shouted at the top of his voice, but the giant was so tall that only a faint cry reached his ears.

At last the giant located Ouj. He bent, picked him up and laid him in the palm of his hand as a man would lay a locust or another insect, and asked him what he wanted.

Ouj asked the giant who he was and what brought him to that place.

The giant replied that he was a shepherd boy. He had a brother older and greater than he. They lived with their parents, until one day they disobeyed their father, who was so angry with them that he put them in the strap of his sling and, swinging it around his head a few times, slung it. One of the giants fell in the east, the other in the west.

And from that day on Ouj, the son of Anak, never boasted of his greatness!

## THE TALE OF ABU KATRINA, OR THE MAN WHO WOULD RATHER DIE THAN WORK

**I**N all the lands on the banks of the Nile, from Upper Sudan to the Delta, there was none lazier than Abu Katrina. He dreaded work as the very plague itself and dodged it with a skill that would have done credit to his illustrious countryman of ancient renown, *Ali Quicksilver*, and his challenger, the *Wily Delilah*.

If it were not for his wife it is doubtful that Abu Katrina would have done an honest day's work in his whole lifetime. But Abu Katrina feared his wife, like all ne'er-do-well husbands and even some good ones.

Every morning Abu Katrina's wife would awaken him with many an oath and curse and kick him out to work. By the time he dressed and swallowed his frugal breakfast of dry bread and black olives, made less palatable by the squabbling din of his wife's angry chatter, the sun would be high in the sky.

Day in, day out, it was the same story.

One day, contrary to his custom, this sun-dodger came home bringing under his arm a bundle. This was rather a strange sight for Abu Katrina's wife, who eyed him dubiously, for rarely did her husband indulge in any such act of providence, leaving for her the household duties as well as the prerogatives and authority which go with the head of a family in an eastern country.

"What have you under your arm?" quizzed Abu Katrina's wife. "May it please Allah that you have thought at last of bringing some provisions for the family!"

Without saying a word Abu Katrina unfurled the bundle, and behold, it consisted of a linen sheet, a wash cloth and soap.

"What are these for," demanded his wife, "and who told you we need these articles at present?"

But the man's intentions were quite far removed from anything his wife could possibly have thought of.

Limpidly, and with a very sad and serious mien, Abu Katrina handed the linen and other accessories to his wife, saying:

"Take these, my wife, and make me a shroud and prepare for my funeral, for I shall presently die."

The woman was greatly surprised at these words of her husband and did not know at first whether to take them seriously or not.

"What mean you by such talk?" asked his wife, rather anxiously. "Have you taken poison, or has a scorpion bit you?"

"Neither this nor that," explained Abu Katrina. "I have simply grown weary of life and of your endless nagging and I have made up my mind to die."

"Are you a fool?" retorted Abu Katrina's wife. "How can any man foretell the hour of his death?"

But Abu Katrina was dead set and could not be swayed from his determination by the arguments, ridicule or threats of his wife.

"Don't argue with me, woman!" he commanded finally. "Go wail for me and call the neighbor women to cry over me."

Saying which, Abu Katrina stretched himself at full length on the floor, closed his eyes and pretended he was dead.

The woman, thinking her husband actually had breathed his last, began to wail, and the children, seeing their mother cry, gathered around their father and began to cry, too. The neighbors came together to find what had happened, and there,

stretched motionless, they saw Abu Katrina, to all intents and purposes as dead as a log.

Then the *imam* was called for and the preparations for the funeral were made in earnest. They washed Abu Katrina with soap and water and wrapped him in his shroud of white linen.

Then Abu Katrina's wife, still not convinced that her husband was really dead, bent over him and, amid the confused noise of the wailers, whispered in his ear, saying:

"Get up, you fool! They are taking you to the cemetery!"

"Let them carry me," whispered back Abu Katrina, "for at least I shall no more hear your harsh voice waking me and driving me to work each morning. Let them carry me to my final resting-place where at last I will slumber on to my heart's content."

Abu Katrina's wife was in a quandary, as you will readily imagine. To betray her husband's hoax to the neighbors would only bring ridicule and humiliation on herself. Besides who ever thought of carrying on an argument with a supposedly dead man to bring him to reason and convince him that he was not dead?

She was thus thinking when a neighbor of hers,



a shrewd and wise woman, noticed her perplexity. She moved up to her and asked her what the trouble was.

“Confide in me, my sister,” she said, “and I pledge you my virtue that I will not betray your secret. I have seen you bend down and whisper something in your husband’s ear, and I have my suspicion that everything is not honest in this, your husband’s funeral.”

When Abu Katrina’s wife found that somebody else shared the secret of her husband’s supposed death, she confided in her and told her all that had passed between herself and her husband.

“Is that the case then?” smiled the neighbor encouragingly, as she shook her head in a meaning fashion, adding: “Do not worry, my sister, I have your husband’s medicine. Keep up appearances and let the pallbearers carry your husband to the cemetery, and we will go with the crowd. Only do as I tell you and I will wager that your husband will crawl out of his grave of his own accord and come running to you. Take a tin pan with you and hide it under your *habara*, and on the way I will tell you what to do.”

The mock widow did as her helpful neighbor told her to, and when they arrived at the cemetery

Abu Katrina was laid in a spacious cave, where the poor who cannot afford lots of their own are buried. When all had departed and Abu Katrina's wife and her woman neighbor remained behind, they bribed the grave-digger and dismissed him, assuring him that they would inter the body themselves.

Then Abu Katrina's wife stood at one end of the cemetery and her neighbor at the other, within hearing of the worthless husband who would rather die than work. The woman, holding the tin pan in her hand, beat upon it with all her might as she cried in a falsetto voice:

"Oh dead ones, arise! *Archangel Gabriel* has sent me to awaken you and tell you that a section in the wall of *Gehenna* has fallen down, and you must get up and rebuild it!"

When lazy Abu Katrina heard this, he shivered with fear and drew himself together, as he mused: "I have run away from work in life and here I find it waiting for me after death!" But otherwise he made not the slightest motion.

After a moment's pause Abu Katrina's wife, taking up the cue, responded in a faint distant-sounding voice:

"We are all dead and mouldy. There is none among us who is alive and hale save Abu Katrina!"

The two women repeated this performance a few times and departed home.

When everything was silent again, Abu Katrina came to his senses. He thought that the messenger angel had gone back to give the reply to Archangel Gabriel and that in no time he would be back to conscript him alone to rebuild the fallen section of the wall of *Gehenna*.

Without waiting to confirm his own conjecture Abu Katrina wriggled out of his shroud, sprang to his feet and rushed home, reaching his abode just a little after his wife.

He knocked feverishly on the door.

"Who is this?" cried his wife from within, with a false sobbing voice.

"I am Abu Katrina," shouted her husband.

"Abu—Abu Katrina is dead and buried, may Allah have mercy on his soul," replied the wife. "We have just returned from his funeral," she said, keeping up her sobbing.

"Open, open, my wife!" pleaded Abu Katrina. "The dead have discovered that I am alive and the messenger of *Gabriel* is coming after me to impress me for hard labor in *Gehenna*."

Abu Katrina's wife could hardly keep from laughing outright, but for awhile pretended that

she did not believe his story, and refused to listen to his earnest pleading to open the door. Finally she consented to let him in if he promised to go to work every morning of his own free will, without giving her occasion every time to drag him out of bed and drive him to work like a sullen mule.

And this Abu Katrina promised willingly to do.

## THE PASHA'S ONLY DAUGHTER

ONCE upon a time there lived in Damascus, the City of Delight, a great and wealthy governor, Kemal Pasha by name, who ruled his people justly and in the fear of Allah, and who was loved and respected by his people in turn. This pasha had an only child, a daughter of surpassing beauty and ravishing charm, who was given the name of Uns-ul-Juloos, which, translated, means the Delight of Companions.

And such indeed she was. For as she grew into young maidenhood few there were in the inner circle of the governor's friends and companions who could resist the radiant charms of this lovely, noble enchantress. Her round, black gazelle-like eyes, surmounted by thin, black eyebrows, shed light of happiness wherever they cast their furtive glances; her dimpled, rose and cream cheeks inspired a mysterious feeling of repose and ecstasy in those who beheld her; her jet-black tresses were like a magic skein which snared in its meshes unsuspecting hearts. As she moved about with the lightness of

the gentle zephyr, her graceful stature and noble bearing attracted all eyes in her direction as a magnet attracts iron filings.

But if Uns-ul-Juloos was a delight to her father's favored companions, much more was she her parents' special delight.

Kemal Pasha spared nothing in the proper bringing-up and education of his only daughter, upon whom he lavished all the love and devotion which he could have bestowed on an only son. For to him Uns-ul-Juloos was even dearer than an only son would have been. He engaged for her gray-bearded sages to instruct her in the intricacies of Arabic grammar and syntax, master caligraphists to teach her the art of writing, and gifted musicians to teach her how to play the *oud*, *zither* and harp. Besides her own tongue, Arabic, she was taught Turkish and Persian, in which she proved as proficient a pupil as in her own language. She recited by heart page after page from the Persian *Shah-Nameh*, as fluently as she did from the Arabic *Kasida* of *Umr-ul-Kais*.

Nor did her parents neglect the practical side of her education. She was taught how to embroider, prepare exquisite dishes and attend to all the details of elaborate social functions.



When Uns-ul-Juloos became of age, her fame spread far and near. Sons of princes, merchants, scholars and gallant knights came from all quarters of the Ottoman Empire to ask for her hand in marriage. Some came from Damascus itself, and some from Beirut, Aleppo, Baghdad and Constantinople, while others who had heard her fame sung in distant lands came all the way from Samarkand and Buchara.

But they all returned disappointed and heart-broken. For Uns-ul-Juloos, as gently and politely as she knew how, rejected all aspirants to her charms. Brought up by her indulging parents and her zealous tutors to love and admire the best and most perfect in life, she grew to find nothing around her which would correspond with the dream of her fancied ideal. She found some objection or other in every young man who offered his heart and hand to her. This one was not as comely as she wished her would-be husband to be, that one was not her equal in eloquence and rhetoric, and still another displayed a coarseness of spirit from which her sensitive soul recoiled. And thus it was with all the rest of her suitors.

This was kept up year after year, and Uns-ul-Juloos had not made up her mind what suitor to

choose of the hundreds who came up to her father's palace and placed their hearts at her disposal. The line of suitors grew thinner each year, as Uns-ul-Juloos grew older, and her physical charms began to lose their fresh bloom. She was now past twenty, and except for extremely unfortunate or homely girls, it is almost an unheard-of thing in the East for a girl to remain single after her latter teens. Kemal Pasha became much concerned and alarmed at his daughter's conduct. He spoke to his wife about it, and the two discussed it openly with Uns-ul-Juloos more than once.

"People are beginning to gossip," they would tell her, "and wag their heads knowingly. What answer will your father give to his courtiers when they ask him: 'Why has not your daughter married yet?' Or what will your mother have in answer to the gloating inquiries of the noble ladies of Damascus when they boast of their daughters' happy marriages, and end by asking: 'When will Uns-ul-Juloos settle down to married life?' "

To these and other coaxings and pleadings of her parents, Uns-ul-Juloos would answer, sometimes with a downcast face and a tear in her eye, that she did not have a feeling of love for any of the splendid and gallant young men who sought

her hand, and she could not possibly marry any one she did not love.

And this, too, was a heresy in Damascus in those days. For it was not heard of before that a girl should make her marriage depend completely on love. Furthermore, it was the man's privilege and right to love, and that of the woman to be loved. Especially was this true of women of noble birth and aristocratic traditions, as the pasha's daughter undoubtedly was. It was all right for peasant girls who go about in the fields and streets of the villages unveiled to exchange love with their swain suitors, but not for the respectable Moslem girls of the cities. Not that Kemal Pasha actually frowned on the idea that his daughter Uns-ul-Juloos should marry the man she loved. Such a thing would be absurd and inhuman, but it is one thing for a girl to marry the man she loves, and another thing not to marry at all because she could find no one to whom she would surrender her heart.

Kemal Pasha brooded over this matter day and night. He became morose and cross and lost his temper at the slightest provocation. Was this the reward of his devotion and love for his daughter, or was it his due punishment from Allah for being over-indulgent with his daughter, allowing her her

way in all things from her childhood days up? Perhaps he was a little too selfish, for he never could bear to see Uns-ul-Juloos angry or crying.

And just as Kemal Pasha was passing through this mood of remorse and self-reproach, another suitor, the son of the Turkish governor of Smyrna, came to Damascus to seek the hand of Uns-ul-Juloos in marriage, and he, too, was rejected.

Kemal Pasha was beside himself with rage. He swore by the head of the sultan and by the bones of his ancestors that he would give his daughter this time to the meanest drudge in the city.

No sooner said than done. Before the pasha's rage had a chance to cool off, he sent his men to look for the meanest drudge in Damascus. In a few hours they came back and reported to him that the meanest drudge they could find in the great city of Damascus was a certain Shihab-ud-Din Abu-l-Shamat, the assistant stoker in the fire room of the *Kaimariyyah* public bath. Nobody seemed to know anything about this young man except that he was a habitual drunkard and a shiftless fellow who could not be depended upon to work, and that he had lost one job after another until he had reached his present pitiable stage.

This knowledge notwithstanding, Kemal Pasha

sent for the man, and offered him the hand of his peerless daughter, Uns-ul-Juloos, in marriage. The mufti of Damascus was sent for, and the marriage ceremony performed in spite of the bride's bitter tears and the mother's fervent protests. The pasha of Damascus had uttered his solemn word and there was nothing to stay or gainsay it save the hand of grim death itself. Thus it was that Uns-ul-Juloos was given in marriage at last to one who would not have been considered fit as a groom in her father's stables.

Now Shihab-ud-Din, who went through the ceremony of marriage half dazed, did not quite realize what it was all about. He pinched himself repeatedly to assure himself that he was not in a dream, and that the beautiful young lady sitting next to him was not a creature of his muddled imagination. He touched her timidly and chuckled to himself as she recoiled with repulsion from him. Yes, she was a living beauty, not a *houri* of whom he had dreamed day and night, but who had always vanished into thin air when he woke up.

Uns-ul-Juloos went with her new husband, who took her to live in a dark, dingy cellar of a deserted house in a winding, narrow lane in the quarter of the city known as *Bab Tuma*. Shihab-ud-Din went

that evening to a public bath and for the first time in several months he had a good scouring and a scrub down, and a clean change of clothes. He began to realize that he was the Pasha's son-in-law. When Uns-ul-Juloos saw him after he came back from the bath, she was quite surprised, for he was a handsome man, tall and of stately stature.

The day after, Shihab-ud-Din did not go to work. Uns-ul-Juloos, stripping herself of some jewelry she had been wearing, a precious ruby bracelet and pearl earrings, handed them to her husband and told him to go to the jeweler's *bazaar* and sell them, but under no condition to part with them for less than five hundred Turkish pounds. Then she gave him a list of household articles, furniture, kitchen utensils and other household necessities, of which Shihab-ud-Din's cellar was as bare as the home of a field mouse.

Shihab-ud-Din did as his wife ordered him. He went to the jeweler's *bazaar* and had no difficulty at all in getting for the jewels the price which his wife had set for him, for they were worth even more than that. On his way back to the furniture work-shops, he passed a tavern and the temptation to go in and indulge himself in a drinking debauch, now that he was amply supplied with funds, came



very strongly on him. But he resisted bravely. He thought of his new bride, his earthly *houri* whom Allah had sent him, although he knew at heart that he was least deserving of Allah's bounteous grace. He was not going to refuse this new and glorious opportunity to repent and make of himself a man worthy of his noble bride. There and then Shihab-ud-Din, turning away from the tavern door, and with his arm raised to heaven to witness his oath, swore that never more would his lips touch the fermented juice of grapes or any other intoxicating drink.

The day was spent in furnishing the cellar and turning it into a habitable place. Porters came with the furniture, followed by Shihab-ud-Din, who assisted his wife, Uns-ul-Juloos, in arranging the furniture.

As days and months passed, Uns-ul-Juloos began to take a liking to her husband. He was docile and eager to learn from his superior and better half. It was not difficult for Shihab-ud-Din to submit to his wife's instructions and directions, for was she not the governor's only daughter, and were not the destinies of all the people of Damascus in her father's hands, however great or humble they might be?

The pleasures and attractions for which Shihab-ud-Din had bartered his own self-respect and future prospects began to seem tawdry and vulgar when compared with the pleasures of his wife's companionship. He was no more an assistant stoker in a public bath, for he soon found work as a gardener in a rich man's estate. All day long, as he was occupied in trimming the shrubs or weeding the flower beds, his thoughts were with his beautiful bride at home. His erstwhile gloomy cellar which he had used only as sleeping quarters when he was not spending the nights in some disreputable tavern, became a love-nest for him. He could hardly wait for the sun to set, that he might go home and be with his bride.

And Shihab-ud-Din was fired now with a burning ambition, not only to get along in the world, but to improve his mind that he might be a worthy companion of his bride, and that he might be able to converse with her properly and intelligently. Needless to say, Uns-ul-Juloos encouraged her husband in his ambitions. She taught him how to read and write, and it was not long before he began to read and understand some of the great books in the Arabic language. He bought a copy of the *Koran* and read it from cover to cover. Then he

bought an anthology of Arabic poetry, a copy of *Kalila wa Dimna* and other famous books in his native tongue. A new world, with glorious and illusive charms, opened before his inner eyes, a world the like of which he had never dreamed of even in his state of most blissful inebriation.

Shihab-ud-Din was no more satisfied with himself. He began to aspire for greater things and was always on the alert for an opportunity to improve himself. That opportunity was soon forthcoming.

One day in the Hajj season, when pious Moslems prepare for the annual pilgrimage to the holy city of Mecca, Shihab-ud-Din heard that the shaykh of the Hajj was looking for a chief water carrier to accompany him on the pilgrimage. For some mysterious reason, every one approached for the job turned it down and would have nothing to do with it. Shihab-ud-Din thought that whatever it was that frightened people away from this job was not going to stand in his way. The job was lucrative and afforded him, besides, the opportunity of travel and experience, to say nothing of the meritorious performance of a religious duty incumbent on all good Moslems. Especially did he feel that duty incumbent on him to prove his gratitude to Allah, who had raised him from the abyss of wretch-

edness and degradation to the pinnacle of happiness.

After consulting his wife, who reluctantly yielded to his wish, for she had grown quite attached to him by now, Shihab-ud-Din applied for the job and was accepted on the spot. In a few days he bid his dear wife farewell and started on his precarious journey across the desert as the chief water carrier of the pilgrimage to Medina and Mecca.

The pilgrimage caravan, consisting of several hundred camels with two riders or more on each camel, not to mention the mules and donkeys, averaged only twelve miles a day on the dusty dirt route, winding itself through the deserts of Syria and Hijaz, stopping for the nights near a spring or well of water, and sometimes traveling several days before coming upon water.

One night, after several days' travel, the caravan came to Maan, far beyond the Syrian borders, and camped near its wells, which are very wide and deep, and as it was the summer season there was water in only one of them.

There was a weird tradition, however, connected with this well. It was known among all water carriers of the caravans that it was inhabited by an

evil *jan*, a huge and ugly *marid*, from whom seldom did one escape alive. The *marid* refused to let any one draw water from the well. Shihab-ud-Din was kept in the dark about this secret, and therefore, when every water carrier refused to go down the well, he decided to go down and find for himself the cause of their fear.

With a rope passed under his arm-pits, which were first padded with old rags so that the rope would not chafe him, Shihab-ud-Din was slowly lowered down into the well. When he reached the surface of the water, he stood on a ledge or rock which proved to be the threshold of a large and airy cave. Shihab-ud-Din peeked in and his eyes met a most extraordinary and strange sight. The cave was richly furnished with costly Persian rugs, and decked with precious ornaments of all descriptions. On the carpet sat a most foreboding and ugly *marid* with two women, sitting one on each side of him.

"Salute, oh Shihab-ud-Din, and come forward," shouted the *marid* from inside. With trembling heart Shihab-ud-Din stepped in the cave. He bowed low and remained standing, with his arms politely crossed and tucked in his sleeves. The *marid* allayed his fears and motioned him to sit down, and when Shihab-ud-Din sat down, the *marid* fixed him with

a piercing gaze, then, looking first at one then the other of the two women sitting beside him, he turned to Shihab-ud-Din and addressed him, saying:

“Oh Shihab-ud-Din, which of these two ladies is the more beautiful?”

Shihab-ud-Din looked at the two wives of the *marid*. One was a beautiful blonde with lovely golden hair, large, blue eyes, lips that resembled two ripe cherries and teeth like a row of pearls; the other a brunette of petite size, beautiful eyes and raven-black hair. But it was evident that, measured by the ordinary standards of beauty, the brunette lady did not compare for a moment with the blonde one. He thought that had not the *marid* loved his two wives equally well he would not have lived with them in such evident peace and contentment at the bottom of a lonely pit. He noticed, too, that when the *marid* looked at his wives he showed equal fondness for them. There must be some charm about the brunette wife, Shihab-ud-Din argued to himself, which made her equally dear to the *marid's* heart. Furthermore, why bring trouble to one's self, and perhaps discord also to the *marid's* happy family, by haphazarding an opinion on a subject that is so delicate and contentious? So after a mo-



ment's contemplation he raised up his head and replied:

"Oh prince of the *jinn*, it is the height of presumption for a stranger to express an opinion on a subject so delicate and so private. But since you have demanded it I will say that beauty is not a matter of the eye only, but of the soul. There are charms that the visible eye can see, and others that only the inner one can detect. It is said that when they asked *Majnun-Laila*, the paragon and prince of all lovers, what did he see in *Laila* that he raved about her so much he answered: 'Take my eyes and look at her with them.' The charms of women, oh happy *marid*, are varied and subtle. To compare between two types of beauty in women is as foolish as to compare between two beautiful flowers."

The *marid* was beyond himself with delight at hearing Shihab-ud-Din's reply, which seemed to express so eloquently his own preconceived ideas.

"Oh Shihab-ud-Din, signal by the rope to your men to pull you up, and let them send somebody else to fill the skin bottles with water, for it is not proper that one with your superior intellect and balanced judgment should perform such menial labor. All those who had come before you have perished by their own clumsy wits and too ready

tongues. Am I blind not to see that in physical appearance my blonde wife is the more attractive? Why then waste precious words in telling me that she is the more beautiful? Go in peace, oh Shihab-ud-Din, and for your sake I have decided not to molest the caravans of the pilgrimage any more. They may fill their skin bottles from this well as often as they wish."

And just as Shihab-ud-Din started out to signal for his companions above to pull him up, the *marid's* brunette wife walked up to him and, taking him aside, said:

"Oh Shihab-ud-Din, little do you realize how grateful I am to you for the rest of my life and how much misery and humiliation you have saved me. For is it an easy thing for me to hear people tell me to my face that I am not as beautiful as the *marid's* other wife, when I love him as much, if not more, than she?" Then pressing something in the palm of his hand she said:

"This precious ring is a gift from me to your young bride whom you left behind in Damascus."

Shihab-ud-Din was surprised that the *marid's* wife knew he was married. But the brunette lady did not even give him a chance to ask how she knew. She guessed his surprise, as she said:

"You need not be surprised that I knew you were married, and that only recently. I could read it in your eyes, which, while looking at us, seemed to be wandering far away and dreaming of your distant beloved. It must have been she indeed who inspired you with that saving answer."

Shihab-ud-Din signalled by the rope and his companions were overjoyed to know that he was still alive. They called and he answered back and when he came to the surface he assured them that it was all right to draw water from the well and showed them his own skin bottles filled with the precious fluid. The pilgrims showered Shihab-ud-Din with their gratitude, and a large purse was collected for him from among them. Then when the water carriers drew all they needed, the caravan moved to the next stage.

The pilgrims had not gone more than a day's journey when they met another caravan coming from Hijaz, and it happened that the leader of this returning caravan was a man known to Shihab-ud-Din and reputed for his great honesty and trustworthiness. Folding the ring in a kerchief, Shihab-ud-Din requested him to hand it in person to his wife, giving the exact direction to his home in the cellar.

And when the returning caravan reached Damascus, its leader went straightforth to Shihab-ud-Din's house and gave his wife, Uns-ul-Juloos, the trust which her husband had given him. She thanked him profusely, and was happy in the thought that her husband had not forgotten her on his pilgrimage to Mecca.

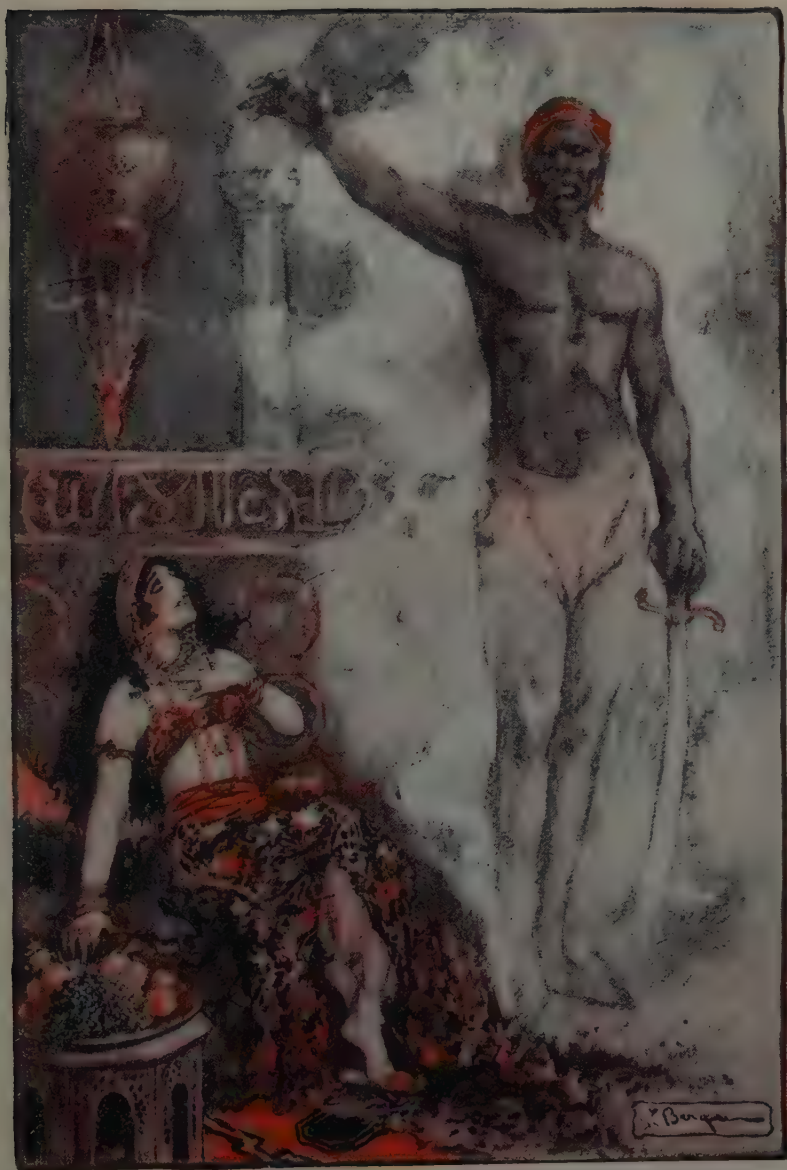
Uns-ul-Juloos was burning with curiosity to find what her husband's gift was. No sooner had the leader of the caravan left than she unfolded the kerchief and found a beautiful ring. She kissed it and put it on her finger, then, extending her hand, gazed at the ring admiringly.

One day, as Uns-ul-Juloos was removing her ring, she turned it to the left, and, behold! a huge black *marid* suddenly appeared. Uns-ul-Juloos was frantic with fear, but the *marid* quieted her and dispelled her fear, as, bowing down with all humility, he said:

"Fear not, noble lady, I am but the servant of this ring you wear. Ask, and whatever your wish or desire may be, even if it were in the *Land of Kaf* or the islands of *Wak-Wak*, I will bring it to you!"

At these words Uns-ul-Juloos regained her composure and after a moment's hesitation said:

"Oh good *marid*, if wishes come true, then build



Uns-ul-Julous turned her ring to the left, and behold ! a huge black *marid* suddenly appeared.





me a palace on the hill of *Salihhiyyah* which will surpass even the palace of the Pasha of Damascus in magnificence and elegance."

The *marid* bowed again and disappeared. And the next day a great and imposing palace suddenly appeared on the heights of *Salihhiyyah* overlooking Damascus. Uns-ul-Juloos moved to her new palace, having first scribbled with a charcoal a note to her husband on the wall of the cellar, that she had moved to the new palace on *Salihhiyyah* and gave him directions how to find the place.

Then rubbing the magic ring another time, Uns-ul-Juloos asked of the *marid* to furnish the palace with the best and most expensive of furniture, rugs to surpass the most luxurious ones that ever came from the looms of the master weavers of *Suruk* or *Karmanshah*, divans and ottomans of ebony wood inlaid with mother-of-pearl that would be the despair of the most skilled cabinet makers of Damascus, tapestries of fantastic designs that tell strange tales of love and adventure, and golden and crystal chandeliers of magic workmanship that will sparkle with the light of a thousand candles. In short, she wanted the palace furnished in such a fashion that it would make the pasha's palace pale into insignificance.

And the *marid* fulfilled her wish and gave her all that she asked for and more.

The people of Damascus, in the meantime, had been all agog with surprise and curiosity about the new palace which they had never noticed before on the heights of *Salihyyah*. And not least among those was the pasha himself, who secretly envied the owner of the palace, who, he thought, must be some strange prince who had settled in Damascus. Often did he sigh as he confided to his wife saying: "How fortunate we would have been if our daughter had married such a prince and owned such a palace as this!"

It was more than a passing expression of regret. There was a deep feeling of guilt and bitter remorse behind his words. For the pasha of Damascus, not long after marrying his daughter to the meanest drudge in the city, had regretted his rash action and sought to amend it. He sent his men to the *Kaimariyyah* public bath to fetch his daughter, but they did not find Shihab-ud-Din there, nor did the stoker know where his assistant lived or where he could be found. The pasha searched the city in vain for his daughter but could find her nowhere.

And not long after, the pilgrim caravan returned

from Mecca. Shihab-ud-Din went straight to his humble cellar in *Bab Tuma*, but found it deserted. His heart sank within him, as the thought came to him that Uns-ul-Juloos might have died in his absence or deserted him and gone back to her father. Then his eyes fell on the writing on the wall. He read it and his spirits came back to him. She was living and still his own, but what means she by such writing, and what palace could she be speaking of?

He wasted no time on such riddles. Soon enough he would find out. He hurried to *Salihyyah* and in a few minutes was before a palace more sumptuous and magnificent than anything he had ever seen before. He knocked at the door and presently a huge, black doorman opened it to him. Shihab-ud-Din announced himself as a messenger from the pilgrim caravan who wished to speak to the mistress of the palace. The doorman bowed and led the way to a spacious waiting room, elegantly furnished, and from the walls of which hung tapestries of exquisite designs and rich colors, while three tall mirrors reaching from the floor to the ceiling decorated the room, reflecting in an enchanting manner the crystal sparkles that spouted and splashed from a marble fountain in the middle of the room.

Shihab-ud-Din was lost in amazement and wonder at the meaning of all this, and what his wife could be doing in such a palace when, turning around, he saw her standing at the door. He rushed to her with open arms, as she hastened to meet him crying with astonishment:

“Is it you, Oh Shihab-ud-Din?”

There were tears of joy in their eyes as they embraced and each told of their suffering and longing at the absence of the other.

“But what means this palace and where did you get the money to raise it up?” asked Shihab-ud-Din anxiously.

Uns-ul-Juloos told him that the palace was built and furnished with the present that he had sent her from the pilgrimage, relating to him the story of the magic ring.

A month passed in blissful happiness. Then, one day, Uns-ul-Juloos said to her husband:

“What do you say if we hold a banquet and invite to it my parents and all the dignitaries of Damascus? I am told that there is no other topic on the tongues of the people of Damascus but the topic of this palace of ours, and how it sprang suddenly overnight and who its owners are. I think that it is time we put an end to their curiosity.”

Shihab-ud-Din agreed with his wife and the two set a date for the banquet and Uns-ul-Juloos herself penned the invitations with her own beautiful handwriting in letters of gold on pink satin and sent them out with a horseman. The invitation to the Pasha of Damascus was the most elaborate and beautiful, written on a piece of velvet silk half a yard in length.

On the day set for the banquet, Uns-ul-Juloos rubbed the ring, and suddenly the *marid* appeared.

"Behold your servant between your hands, declare your wish that I may fulfill it," said the *marid*, bowing politely. Uns-ul-Juloos asked that a troop of slaves, musicians and singing girls appear at once to help in the banquet that evening. The *marid* disappeared for awhile, and presently a troop of ebony-black, lithe slaves, skilled musicians with their instruments and beauteous singing girls with sweet and exquisite voices followed at his heels.

Uns-ul-Juloos gave them instructions what to do, while she herself supervised the cooking in the kitchen.

At the proper hour the guests began to arrive and when they had all assembled in the great reception room, they were led to their seats in the banquet hall which sparkled with the light of

scented candles from golden and crystal chandeliers.

The Pasha of Damascus was led to the honor seat at the head of the table, with his wife sitting at his right, while Shihab-ud-Din, welcoming everybody with a genial smile and making everybody feel at home, occupied the opposite end of the table.

The pasha was highly impressed by the strange host, who was groomed and regaled for this grand occasion with pantaloons of rarest woollen, a golden-braided tubran and a bejewelled silken turban of variegated colors. Shihab-ud-Din's identity had not yet been disclosed. The pasha looked at him admiringly, then sighing deeply, he turned to his wife and whispered in her ear:

"Alas for our poor daughter! How happy and proud we would have been this evening if Uns-ul-Juloos were the wife of this gallant young man, and if she were the hostess of this magnificent palace!"

The pasha's wife made no reply, as she reached under her veil and wiped away a tear.

Shihab-ud-Din noticed them and smiled to himself. How could they possibly know that he was the same son-in-law whom the pasha had chosen for his only daughter because he was the meanest drudge in Damascus?



When two or three courses had been served, Uns-ul-Juloos, who had not shown herself until then, called in a charming waitress and gave her a special dish to carry to the pasha, a dish of *kubbi* stuffed with truffles of which her father was very fond, and instructed her to put it before him, saying:

"This dish was made especially for you by the cook."

The waitress placed the dish before the pasha and gave him the message as she had been instructed by her mistress.

He had scarcely eaten three mouthfuls when the pasha recognized his daughter's own cooking. He choked with his tears, which he was struggling to hold back, as, bending again toward his wife, he said:

"Alas, my wife, Uns-ul-Juloos this very minute is employed in the kitchen of our strange host as a cook. Woe is me that I should have listened to Satan and yielded to the impulse of anger at that accursed hour!"

His wife, too, stopped eating and began to sob softly.

Everybody now, noticing the strange behavior of the pasha and his wife, began to whisper to one another.

Shihab-ud-Din pretended that he did not notice anything, but inwardly his heart was moved and he could hardly bear the strain. He excused himself and went to the kitchen where he told his wife that the sight of her father and mother sighing and grieving for her was too much to bear. It was time, he told her, to end their agony.

Then, arm in arm, he walked with her back to the banquet hall, and to the astonishment of all, but mostly to the astonishment of the pasha and his wife, Shihab-ud-Din bowed gracefully, and with a mischievous smile in his eyes, he announced slowly and distinctly:

“My lord the pasha, her highness the pasha’s wife, and the dignitaries of Damascus, allow me to present to you my wife, Uns-ul-Juloos.”

There was a great confusion of surprise and joy, as Shihab-ud-Din, continuing, disclosed his own identity as the same Shihab-ud-Din whom the pasha selected because he was considered then the meanest drudge in Damascus.

The banquet from then on became a joyous festivity, as Uns-ul-Juloos, with many warm embraces and kisses, was reunited with her parents.

The Pasha of Damascus was amazed to see how much change could come to a man in such a short

time. He was now truly proud of his son-in-law, whose story soon spread throughout the land, and people praised Allah who can do such wonders and in the twinkling of an eye change the destinies of men.

Shihab-ud-Din lived happily with his wife and they had several children. He was soon appointed to a high position in the pasha's court, and when the pasha died, the sultan, with an official *faraman*, appointed Shihab-ud-Din governor of Damascus in his place.

## NONE SO STUPID

A RICH squire in a little village near Damascus, wishing to propitiate the governor for some past offense, sent him a present of ten choice sheep with his shepherd who was usually honest but unusually stupid.

On the road to Damascus the shepherd grew hungry. Looking in all directions and finding nobody in sight, he slaughtered one of the sheep, and when he had his fill of the choice meat of the sheep, he resumed his journey.

Once in Damascus, the shepherd was directed to the governor's palace where he announced his mission and was ushered into the governor's presence without much ado. He prostrated himself and, kissing the floor three times, arose and handed the governor a letter from his master acquainting him with the nature and purpose of the present.

The governor read the letter and, turning to the shepherd, asked: "Where are the sheep that your master speaks of in his letter?"

The shepherd answered that they were outside in the courtyard.

The governor went out and, counting the sheep, found they were missing one sheep.

"Where is the other sheep?" asked the governor. "Your master states in his letter that he sent me ten."

"So are they ten, your worship," stupidly replied the shepherd.

"But there are only nine here," asserted the governor.

"So are they nine, your worship," retorted the shepherd meekly.

At this the governor lost his temper as he thundered at the shepherd:

"You wretched lout, how could they be ten and nine at the same time? There are only nine here."

Yet the governor could elicit no other answers from the shepherd but, "so are they ten, your worship," or "so are they nine, your worship."

At last, despairing of making the shepherd understand, and wishing to give him an object lesson in simple arithmetic, the governor commanded ten of his soldiers to hold each a sheep. Naturally one remained without a sheep.

"Now!" asked the governor triumphantly, "where is the sheep of this fellow?"

To which the shepherd dryly replied:

"Was he struck with blindness? Why didn't he catch one?"

## WHAT THE HAMDIYYAH SAID

**I**N a little town near Aleppo, an ancient city in northern Syria from which pistachio nuts come, there lived in the early reign of the notorious Sultan Abdul-Hamid two brothers, Hamid and Hammud. The first was rich, but had no children, the other poor and had eight children. And Hamid, with all his riches, was very niggardly toward his brother, not so much from any natural dearth of the milk of human kindness as from fear of his wife, a close-fisted, hard-faced virago of a mean disposition.

Occasionally Hamid would visit his brother, bringing with him trifling presents of candy and nuts, hardly enough to go around the big family; and almost invariably on leaving he would turn to his brother and brother's wife and say: "Pray Allah that he may grant me a son, and if your prayers are heard I will give you a sheep from my fold."

Hammud and his wife, in the ardor of their faith, which was not unmingled with visions of a roasted sheep sizzling in its bed of savory gravy, never ceased praying for their kinsman's sake that



Allah might grant him a baby boy. And Allah, in due time, heard their prayers.

And no sooner had Hammud heard the happy news than he hastened to claim the reward, never doubting that it was the efficacy of his and his wife's prayers which had wrought the miracle. He rushed to his brother's in all haste, and, not finding him, Hammud congratulated his brother's wife upon the birth of her baby boy, and presented his claim of the sheep to her. But Hamid's wife knew nothing of the bargain which her husband had made with her brother-in-law, and refused to believe that his prayer or that of his wife had anything to do with the birth of her baby. From her bed she refused her brother-in-law's demand for the sheep, telling him in so many words that sheep cost money, and that if he was so anxious to get one he should work hard and buy one in the open market. But Hammud was not to be turned aside so easily. He knew his rights, and was not going to be robbed of them by a curtain lecture from a mere woman. So without further ado Hammud hurried out of the room of his brother's wife and went straight to the sheep's corral and, picking a particularly fat sheep, dragged it home by its horns and slaughtered it as soon as he got there. That very same

evening Hammud's family had their fill of lamb's meat, which, in their hurry and hunger, they did not wait to cook, but ate roasted on spits as they gathered around the open fire and snatched this one a piece and that one another of the choice meat. Not a morsel did they leave to the next day.

When Hamid returned home his wife poured into his ear a bitter complaint against his brother, and told him how in his absence he had come like a highway robber and ran away with a sheep from the fold, ending with an oath that unless he go right forth and bring back that sheep from his brother Hammud she would make it hot for both of them when she got well enough to leave her bed.

Sheepishly, Hamid went out to carry his wife's behest. He proceeded to his brother's home and demanded the purloined sheep. Hammud reminded him that the sheep was his own by right as the reward for his prayer in his brother's behalf.

"My chest has caved in by virtue of much knocking in praying to Allah to grant your wife a son, and now that Allah has heard my prayer you begrudge me the trifling reward of a sheep which you had made to me of your own free will." Then pointing to a gory heap of skin, hoofs and horns he told his brother:

"That is all that is left of your sheep. Not a morsel was left over from last night's supper."

"Then pay me the price of my sheep," pressed Hamid.

"Nor do I have that to give," snapped Hammud defiantly, "and if you think you have a case against me, take it to the *cadi* of Aleppo."

"Then to the *cadi* we will both go!"

And so the next day Hamid and Hammud were on their way to Aleppo to lay their case before its *cadi*, a man of great learning and subtlety, but with an ear more keenly attuned to the soft whisper of a proffered bribe than to the stern voice of justice. Hamid rode a mule and Hammud trudged on foot behind him.

At noon the two stopped to rest at a caravan inn on the way. The inn-keeper, who knew Hamid well, came out to welcome him and led away his mount to the stable, but Hammud was completely ignored, for his brother was ashamed to acknowledge him or introduce him to the inn-keeper as his brother. So Hammud sat alone in a corner and when all had rested a little, Hamid ordered a broiled chicken for dinner and invited the inn-keeper and his family to share his meal with him. Hammud waited anxiously to be invited and when

no invitation was forthcoming he took out a bundle tucked in his bosom and spread out his meagre meal, a few pies of spinach fried in olive oil, which his wife had prepared for him, and began to eat. At this, the inn-keeper's dog, a fine breed of a collie, made straight to Hammud and snatched one of his pies as he was lifting it to his mouth.

Now Hammud, who had borne his slights in sullen silence all this time, could contain himself no longer at this savage inroad on his frugal sustenance. Giving vent to his suppressed chagrin he picked up a large-sized stone and hurled it at the dog, swearing between his teeth: "May Allah fill your belly with the food of *gehenna*. Has all that rich spread yonder turned your appetite away that you have come to snatch away from me my little provision?"

But how great was Hammud's surprise when the dog gave one piercing yelp and fell on its side dead.

The inn-keeper ran up to his dog, and, failing to rouse it by his calls, caresses and kicks, held Hammud by the collar demanding from him the price of his dog.

Stunned at this new turn of misfortune, Hammud did not know what to say or do. But remembering that his state could not possibly be any

worse, and recalling the well known proverb that "the penniless are in the security of Allah," he pulled himself loose from the inn-keeper and, pointing to his brother, said:

"See you that man yonder? He is my brother and we are on our way to Aleppo where he has a grievance against me to lay before its *cadi*. If you think you have another, follow him."

And so indeed he did, and, when the two brothers resumed their journey to Aleppo the inn-keeper joined them on his mule.

They had not gone very far when they came upon a lonely traveller on the road, a muleteer, whose mule had stuck in a muddy bog by the road. He appealed to them for help, but no one paid heed to him except Hammud, who stopped, and holding by the tail of the mule, while the owner held by the head, pulled with all his might. Indeed he pulled so hard that the mule's tail came out in his hands, and he himself fell flat on his back, while the mule, smarting with pain, made such a jump that he extricated himself from the muddy hole.

The muleteer raised a hue and cry, shouting: "You have mutilated my mule. I want my mule from you!"

Brushing the dust from himself, and fixing the

stranger with a look too eloquent for words, he pointed to his brother and the inn-keeper, saying:

“See you those two men on the road yonder? Each has a case against me and they are now on their way to the *cadi* of Aleppo. Follow them you, too, and bring your grievance before him!”

And so the muleteer also rode his tailless mule and followed Hamid and the inn-keeper to lay his claim of damages against poor Hammud before the *cadi* of Aleppo. Hammud himself followed at a distance. With head bowed in distress and worry, reflecting over his ill-fortune which seemed to cling to him like his shadow and turn even the rewards of his kindness into evil recompense, he shuffled his heavy, tired feet along the dusty caravan road.

After a few hours' travel all arrived at Aleppo. Hammud's accusers went to the Wezir Khan, the largest inn in the city, but Hammud himself, who had not the wherewithal to pay the inn-keeper, went to the Mosque of Zakariyyah and slept in its spacious court where unfortunate strangers like himself and beggars of all description, native and alien, pass the night.

Hammud had hardly slept a wink. He woke up morose and depressed at the approach of his doom. He thought of his poverty, of his large family at



home, to feed which he had kept on the run, slaving and sweating year in and year out, never enjoying a happy day like the rest of his townspeople. He thought of his stingy brother who sought to rob him even of the reward of his prayers, and finally of the string of misfortunes which Allah, praised be He in His inscrutable wisdom, saw fit to heap on his already over-bent shoulders. To have run away would have availed him nothing, for the arm of Turkish justice was long and heavy, and, even if he escaped, the heartless, oppressive *sapti* (the Turkish gendarmes) would have exacted every ounce of indemnity from his family, parking at his home with their drinking and carousing till every penny was paid. Perhaps Allah had forsaken him completely, he thought, and the best way out of all his troubles would be to end it all and rid himself and his family of this life's miseries.

In this mood of utter despair he ascended the *minaret* of the mosque and threw himself headlong to the court. But Allah's will was not Hammud's, and the ending which Hammud wished to make to his life-story was not the one written in the hidden book of destiny. For it happened that two Kurdish highwaymen were at that very moment sitting under the *minaret* and dividing their spoils and as

Hammud fell he struck one of them. The Kurd died instantly, but Hammud remained alive. The companion of the dead Kurd jumped on Hammud and holding fast to his *aba* he ejaculated in his mixed Arabic and Kurdish to the great crowd which had gathered around them to see what had happened, adding with a heavy oath that he would not let go of his adversary until he could drag him before the *cadi* and make him pay the life-indemnity of his comrade. Hammud shrugged his shoulders and told the Kurd that he was ready to go with him to the *cadi* that very moment.

And so the Kurd took Hammud to the *cadi* of Aleppo, where already his other accusers were waiting for him.

Now, from the black abyss of Hammud's wretchedness a brilliant idea flashed upon him. As he entered the court he caught the eye of the *cadi*, and giving him a sly wink, he made a swishing motion with his hand, as if to indicate to him that he would give him half the fines in bribe if he should judge in his favor. The *cadi* caught on to Hammud's gesture and returned it with a faint smile and a gentle nod.

Then, sitting with all dignity in his chair, the *cadi* asked the nature of the complaints and who were the plaintiffs and who the defendants. The

accusers pointed at Hammud and told his honor that they all had come to sue him for damages. Then the *cadi* ordered the plaintiffs to lay their cases before him each in turn, in order of precedence.

So Hamid stepped forward and presented his case to the *cadi*, telling how his brother had falsely claimed a sheep and how in his own absence his brother had come and carried off a sheep from the fold.

When Hamid finished his story, the *cadi* turned to Hammud and asked what he had to say in his own defense.

"It is true, your honor, that I carried off a sheep from his fold," said Hammud, "but it was my just reward for praying fervently day and night that Allah might grant his wife a son."

Now in those days there were several *cadis*, appointed through favoritism and bribery, who were not well-rooted in the involved and intricate Mohammedan canon law, the *shab*. For the benefit of those and others a compendium of the sacred law, in the form of questions and answers, was made. This compendium was called the *Hamdiyyah*; hence the expression: "What does the *Hamdiyyah* say?"

The *cadi* of Aleppo had the *Hamdiyyah* code

before him. When Hamid finished reciting his complaint against Hammud, the *cadi* turned a few pages of the book before him.

“Hm!” muttered the *cadi* wisely as he shook his head significantly, “let us see what the *Hamdiyyah* says!”

Then after an anxious suspense of a few minutes which seemed like hours, the *cadi* shook his head and said:

“The *Hamdiyyah* says that the defendant must return the sheep to the plaintiff, but the plaintiff in turn must give his son to the defendant.”

“Not that, your honor, not that! Let him keep the sheep!” cried Hamid.

The *cadi* shook his head sidewise in firm denial, as he added:

“That is what the *Hamdiyyah* says, or else . . .”

“Else what, your honor?” interrupted Hamid anxiously.

“Or else the plaintiff must pay a fine of five hundred piastres.”

Hamid had no way out of his dilemma now. Naturally he would much rather pay the fine of five hundred piastres than give up his only son. So, with a deep sigh of resignation, he opened his purse and paid the fine.

Then came the turn of the inn-keeper, and he, too, related his story to the *cadi*, telling how Hammud heaved a stone at his dog, his valuable watch-keeper and guard, and caused its instant death.

When the *cadi* had listened to the inn-keeper's tale he turned a few pages more of the book before him and said:

"Let us see what the *Hamdiyyah* says!"

A little suspense followed, after which the *cadi* declared wisely:

"The *Hamdiyyah* says that acts are measured by their intents. It is clear that the defendant did not intend to kill the plaintiff's dog, but merely to drive him away. But the plaintiff must have known that his dog was a ferocious beast which attacked and bit people. Therefore he shall pay the penalty for allowing a biting dog to run loose, a fine of one hundred piastres, or else go to prison."

In vain did the inn-keeper plead innocence of his dog's vice and finally he had to pay the fine which the *cadi* imposed to escape a sentence to jail.

Then came the turn of the muleteer, and he, too, recited his complaint against Hammud—how by his clumsy assistance he caused his mule to lose its tail.

The *cadi* listened attentively. Then, turning the

pages of the book before him as he had done before, he looked up and said:

“The *Hamdiyyah* says that the plaintiff must give the mule to the defendant, who will keep it with him until its tail grows, and then return it to its owner!”

“Have a heart, your honor!” cried out the muleteer. “This mule is my only means of livelihood and I cannot do without it a single day!”

The *cadi* shook his head. “This is what the *Hamdiyyah* says,” he averred solemnly. “You must do that or else pay a fine of fifty piastres.”

Much as he resented it, the muleteer dug deep into his pocket and produced the exact sum of the fine and paid it to the judge.

Finally came the turn of the Kurdish highway robber, and he told in broken Arabic his story of how the defendant Hammud had thrown himself from a *minaret* and killed his companion.

The *cadi* listened patiently, and when the Kurd had finished his tale, he said: “Let us see what the *Hamdiyyah* says.”

Everybody was eager now to hear what the *cadi*'s pronouncement would be in this case. So each pricked his ears keenly as the pillar of civil and divine jurisprudence, lifting his face from the book, resumed:



"The *Hamdiyyah* says that the defendant must sit where the deceased had sat when he was killed, and the plaintiff must ascend the *minaret* and throw himself on the defendant as the defendant so did to the plaintiff's companion."

The Kurd protested and gesticulated wildly at this unheard-of judgment. But the *cadi* was firm and immovable.

"This is what the *Hamdiyyah* says," affirmed the *cadi*, "or else . . ."

"Else what, your honor?" cried the Kurd.

"Or else pay a fine of a thousand piastres."

It was useless for the Kurd to hem and haw, for the word of the *cadi* of Aleppo could not be made twice or turned from its course once it departed from between his lips. So the Kurd, with oaths and threats in his Kurdish tongue, paid the fine exactly as the *cadi* had set it.

Then when Hammud's accusers had filed out from the presence of the *cadi* and Hammud was left alone with him, the *cadi* turned to Hammud and asked him in a round-about way for the bribe which he had promised him. But Hammud, affecting ignorance, asked the *cadi* what he meant, and how could he, a poor man, afford to bribe his honor against all those well-to-do accusers.

“What meant you then with that gesture when you entered the court?” asked the *cadi*, rather nettled.

“May Allah lengthen the days of your honor,” explained Hammud with a cunning smile, “what I meant was that I was bringing you those customers and whatever you got from them we would split in half!”

The *cadi* broke out into hearty laughter at the witty answer of Hammud, and, taking pity on his evident poverty, he actually divided the fines with him. And thus Hammud returned from Aleppo vindicated and enriched to boot by the unjust *cadi* whose greed for bribes this time led his steps into the right path of justice and charity.

## TWO DUNCES AND A THIRD

**T**WO dunces were travelling together on the same road, when one turned to the other and said: "Let us beguile the time away by each of us making a wish, for verily conversation shortens the road."

"Well said," concurred the other. "I will begin by wishing that Allah send me a large flock of sheep, that I may enrich myself with their milk, wool and meat."

"And I," said the first one, "wish that Allah send me a flock of wolves to attack your sheep and tear each one of them from limb to limb!"

"Woe to you," retorted his companion. "Is this the sign of friendship? Is this the reward of companionship on the road?"

The two quarrelled and shouted and presently came to blows, as they reached a bridge over a little stream. When they were both exhausted, they stopped and agreed to make the first one to appear an umpire between them.

It happened that the first one to come their way was an old man driving a donkey before him, loaded with two skin-bottles of honey. The two

dunces stopped him and laid before him their contention.

When the old man had heard their story, he shook his head wistfully and, without uttering a word, went to his donkey and took down the two bottles of honey. Then he brought them to the edge of the bridge and emptied their contents into the stream below, as the two contenders looked on bewildered. Then, turning to them, the old man said:

“Is there any honey in these bottles?”

“No,” replied the two dunces in unison.

“Nor are there any brains in your empty heads!” reproved the *third dunce* as he drove his donkey on.

## THE LESSON OF EXAMPLE

A WISE man, feeling the approach of his end, called his only son to his death-bed, and, counseling him, said:

“My son, I am passing away to face my Creator and shall no more be with you to guide you and steady your footsteps in the rugged path of this mortal life, filled as it is with pitfalls and snares. But there are two enemies lurking for you on the way, of which I especially warn you. These two enemies are drinking and gambling. Beware of them, my son, as you would of the very Iblis, may the curse of Allah be on him. But should you falter and temptation get the best of you, promise me, in this solemn hour, before Allah and his Prophet, that you will not drink until you have seen some one drunk before you; and that you will not gamble until you have first played with the best gambler in town.”

Assured of his son's promise, the father gave up the ghost with a smile of peace and satisfaction.

A year passed and the son had kept his promise to his father faithfully, refraining from drinking and gambling completely. But his companions kept

urging him on to take a drink every time they came together, so that at last he could not resist.

"I will take a drink," he consented, "but first I must see some one drunk before me, as I promised my father on his death-bed."

As he would not be gainsaid on this point, his companions yielded to his whim and pointed out to him a saloon near by. He had not walked very far when he came upon a crowd gathered around a man stretched in the gutter.

"Who is this unfortunate fellow?" asked the young man.

"He is a drunkard," answered one of the crowd, adding with a sneer, "may Allah disgrace him, even more than he has disgraced himself and his family."

"This settles drinking for me," thought the young man as he walked away. "If my condition will be like that of this miserable fellow, despised and cursed by the passers-by, while he lies unconscious in the gutter like a pig, I shall not touch wine with my lips as long as I live!"

Months passed and the same companions came around and urged the young man to join them in a game of chance. He refused, but they kept at him until he yielded. Then, remembering his promise to his father at his death-bed, he told them that he



must first play with the best gambler in town. They laughed at his silly notion, but he insisted, and at last they took him to a famous gambling den and pointed out to him one who was reputed to be the best gambler in town.

The young man gazed at him with wonder and astonishment, almost disbelieving his eyes. For there before him stood a derelict of an old man, with bleary eyes, dishevelled gray hair and greasy, patched clothes. He was slightly bent and tottering with years of dissipation and poverty.

“No, no!” said the young man, as he turned away horrified and much affected. “Never shall I gamble in my whole life. If this be the end of the best gambler in town, what could I, a mere neophyte, gain from dallying with the *Queen of Chance*?”

## THE ADVENTURES OF ALEXANDER THE GREAT, AND HIS SEARCH FOR THE FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH

[To Western children of our day Alexander the Great is an historic hero—one of the outstanding military figures in the history of the world. But to children of the Near East and to Moslem children in general, the name of Alexander the Great is still surrounded with a halo of mythical tradition and romance which raises him from the rank of a mere military conqueror and a mighty king to that of a great sage who falls just short of being a prophet. The mythical and fantastic side of Alexander's story goes back to a Greek legendary history of him written in the third century A. D. and attributed to one of his companions in his Asiatic campaign. But the Arabs elaborated on the Greek legends and adapted them to their own racial traditions, until the Alexander of the Arab romanticist has become quite a unique character, distinct both from the historic figure and from the Greek mythical prototype. He is something of a Moslem caliph and saint, whose name is associated with those of Elijah and Moses. The legends about Alexander the Great must have been current in Arabia even before the time of Mohammed in the seventh century, for the Arabian prophet essays to tell his story in a hazy and disconnected fashion, in response to questioners who ask him about "Alexander the Two-Horned One." Much conjecture by Arab traditionalists follows the explanation of this sobriquet. According to Sir E. A. Wallis Budge, it is a literal translation of two Egyptian words which formed one of the titles of the god Amen-Ra, whose son Alexander was said to be. The story

of *Ponce de Leon* and his search for the *Fountain of Youth* undoubtedly goes back to the legend contained in the following story.—[AUTHOR.]

IT is related that when Alexander the Great with his mighty armies had conquered all the countries of the world, or what was thought then to be the whole settled world; when his phalanxes had swept through Syria, Babylonia, Persia, India and many other countries besides, he waxed proud in his heart, and asked if there were no more countries for him to conquer. He was told that there were many strange lands in the uttermost east and west corners of the world, as well as in the centre, which had never been trodden by the feet of his victorious armies, lands inhabited by strange races of human beings and of *jinn*. But above all there was the Fountain of Youth beyond the Land of Darkness in the extreme north, from which whoever drinks never experiences death, as the rest of mortal men do, but instead attains eternal youth. He becomes lord of the elements, flying at will through the air, walking on water and covering immense distances on land in the twinkling of an eye. Whenever he wished he could disappear, and whenever he wished he could appear again.

On hearing this, Alexander the Great conceived

a burning desire in his heart to invade the Land of Darkness, and beyond it to reach the Fountain of Youth. But alas! he was not destined to moisten his lips from that miraculous fountain, for all that he could boast of endless legions gathered from all the nations of the earth, and for all that his kingdom extended from the River Ganges in the east to the Danube in the west, and from the wild steppes of Turkestan to the burning sands of Abyssinia. This most divine of favors was, instead, reserved to an humble person, a pious and upright subordinate of the great conqueror known to the Greek recounters as Andreas, and to the Arab ones as al-Khidr, which means the *Verdant One*, the one who is clothed with eternal youth and vigor.

This, however, Alexander did not know, nor was it revealed to him by any human or divine agency. Gathering, therefore, his multitudinous army around him he moved northward in search of the Fountain of Youth.

After many days of marching, Alexander the Great came with his great army to a country beyond Turkestan where a God-fearing and peaceful people lived. These welcomed Alexander with rejoicing. They pleaded with the conqueror to protect them against the nation of *Gog* and *Magog*,

who lived beyond where two mountains almost come to a head.

"Build us a rampart to protect us against these savage people," clamored the leaders of the godly people, "lest they descend on us and, sweeping us before them, destroy all the populations of the world, and bring all its countries to devastation."

The curiosity of Alexander the Great was aroused, and he wished to find out for himself who these strange people, *Gog* and *Magog*, were. Disguised, he went into their country alone. To his great surprise he found a people the like of whom he had never met in all his wide travels of conquest. They were all, men and women alike, of one height, which came to a little less than half the height of the average man. They had long, sharp talons for nails, and their teeth and molars were like those of wild animals. But the strangest sight of all was their huge ears. For they were, indeed, so huge that with one they could cover themselves when they slept, while the other they used as a mattress. The upper ear was lined with soft, downy hair, and the lower with coarse hair. They wore no clothes, for their matty hair covered their bodies. And when they ate, the noise they made in masticating their food was like that made by a camel when ruminat-

ing, or an old cow when chewing her cud. As for their number, it was as countless as the sands of the sea, and they were in eternal strife for food, killing one another and devouring everything before them, like hungry locusts.

When Alexander the Great returned from his inspection tour, he started immediately to build the rampart, which became known by his name, for he realized what a great menace these people of *Gog* and *Magog* would be to the whole world if they should overrun the borders of their own country. He put his whole army to the task and divided the work among them and among the nations living in the neighborhood of the two mountains. The foundations were dug to a great depth and then filled with huge rocks; the rampart, held together with molten brass and bars of steel, rose to a great height and was over half a mile in width. When Alexander was through with building the rampart he placed on its top a talisman in the form of a hawk and he wrote on its breast one of the divine names of God. And it is said that when the end of the world approaches, the people of *Gog* and *Magog* will descend on the rampart and lick it with their tongues till it becomes so thin that it will be transparent. At that moment the enchanted hawk will utter one



piercing cry of a warning so loud that nations living within the confines of the rampart will hear it, though hundreds of miles away. After that the invasion of *Gog* and *Magog* will take place and the last hour of this world of ours will have struck.

From there Alexander the Great moved to another country where a righteous and peaceful people lived. The contrast between these people and the people of *Gog* and *Magog* was astounding. Here Alexander was surprised to find that wherever he went he met with beautiful men and women. Even the old had a beauty of their own like a perfect day of autumn. Equally surprised he was when he noticed that each house had a tomb before it and that the houses were without doors, having only openings for people to go in and out, but no partitions of any kind.

He asked who the rulers of the country were, for surely, he thought, they must be great tyrants, feared and obeyed by their subjects so implicitly that there was no fear of theft or any other crime committed. How great was his surprise when he learned that they had no rulers whatsoever, no armies, no police of any sort, no judges, no tax collectors, no jails nor any of the appurtenances which to the Greeks, Persians and all other nations

known to Alexander were considered so necessary that they seemed indispensable.

So amazed was Alexander at these things that he could not help remarking about them.

"Oh strange and happy people," he said, "I have covered the whole world, crossed its seven lands and seven seas, but never have I come upon a people so wonderful in their ways as you. Tell me the secret of your evident happiness and serenity."

And those who were addressed by Alexander replied: "Ask us and we shall answer you."

"Tell me," asked Alexander, "why is it that your houses have no doors?"

"Because there is no dishonesty among us and no one ever suspects another one."

"And why do you have your tombs before your houses?"

"We have done that purposely so that they may ever remind us of death and turn us away from the perishable pleasures of this life."

"And why do you not have kings or princes over you?"

"Because we oppress not one another."

"And how do you get along without governments and courts?" Alexander persisted.

"We are in no need of government and courts,"

they replied, "because we contend not among ourselves, nor seek we to take advantage of one another."

Alexander was not satisfied with this last answer. He wanted to know if they ever had differences among themselves, and, in that case, what they did to settle their differences.

They explained to him that when a difference arose between two parties among them, they arbitrated before some old man or some wise person known to both parties, and whatever his decision, it was accepted by both parties without murmur or complaint. "For," they said, "among us to reject, defy or even resent such an arbitration is considered as heinous a sin as murder or stealing would be considered among you. Arbitration is the cornerstone of our society, and without it we would revert to the conditions which, we read in our histories, prevailed among our ancestors far back in the past."

The more Alexander inquired, the more amazed he became. But there was one thing still on his mind which he was anxious to find out.

"Do you ever go to war?" he asked hesitantly, his inquisitiveness not unmingled with a feeling of shame and apology.

"War?" they replied. "For more than two hun-

dred years we know not what it means. For as long ago as that we found out that covetousness is the source of all strife and war. More than that, we found out that covetousness and love of gain and worldly ambition bring only misery in their wake. We have learned that happiness is another term for contentment and that is why you will find no rich or poor among us. Each has his little share of the goods of this world, and pride finds no access to our hearts.

“With long and tedious discipline we have learned to bridle our passions, to substitute reason for force and to govern our lives by considerations of magnanimity and justice. These things our children learn at school before they learn the elements of reading, writing and arithmetic.”

Alexander the Great was loath to leave these happy people who seemed to belong to another world. He wished he could remain in their country for the rest of his life, but he remembered that they had no kings, and so, he thought, they would have no use for him. Besides, he was still intent on reaching the Fountain of Youth and drinking of its water of immortality. So he returned to his army and prepared for the long, tedious march to the Land of Darkness.

Northward, Alexander moved at the head of his vast army, which stretched in a never-ending line. Beside him and next to him in command was his cousin al-Khidr, a brave and silent man, given to meditation and piety. He was loved by all the generals and soldiers of Alexander, for he bore malice to no one. He was the right-hand man of Alexander, whose orders he carried out justly and humanely, without discrimination or favors. Often did his wise and cool counsels turn Alexander away from the precipitous path of a rash decision made in a moment of passionate impulse or blind rage.

For days, weeks and months Alexander marched northward with his army, past the land of the Turks, past the land of Kaf, until he came to a lonely city called the Twilight City because its light was like twilight all the year round. He stopped and asked about the Land of Darkness. They told him it was beyond their city, adding that it was useless to cross it with that vast army of his and pointed out to him that his horses were not suitable for the journey, for the land was treacherous and soft and would sink beneath their heavy hoofs.

Alexander listened to their advice and chose ten thousand of his bravest soldiers and supplied them with native ponies which looked more like diminutive donkeys than horses.

From there Alexander and his army arrived at the Valley of Sand, which seemed to move like a black cloud. Everything in that valley, its hills, rocks, beasts, birds and creeping creatures were as black as pitch or chunks of the night.

Several days Alexander and his men travelled in the Valley of Sand, with the help of rushlights and candles and guides whom he had taken with him from the City of Twilight.

One day, or night, for they could not tell day from night in that dark valley, as Alexander's army had pitched its tents to rest, Alexander withdrew himself to a solitary place to meditate and pray, when behold! he heard a heavenly voice crying: "Praised be He who has no partner in His kingdom and no contender in His sovereignty. Praised be He whose ways are hidden from the haughty ones and revealed only to the humble."

When Alexander the Great heard the voice he was disturbed within him. He went back to his men and ordered them all to return, retaining with him only his cousin al-Khidr, saying that he had determined to cross the Land of Darkness with al-Khidr alone. Then appointing a general to lead his army back, Alexander proceeded further with al-Khidr, still intent at heart to reach the Fountain of Youth.



Gradually it became darker and darker, for Alexander and al-Khidr were passing into the Land of Darkness and the light they had with them was of no avail. The darkness was so thick that hardly did the light penetrate its rays farther than a few feet around its bearer.

“Oh my cousin,” said Alexander to al-Khidr one day, “verily I seek in this Land of Darkness the Fountain of Youth, from which whosoever drinks becomes immortal in this world and lord of the elements of air, water and all things material. One of us is destined to discover this fountain, and it is a waste of effort that both of us go in the same direction. Go you, therefore, in one direction while I go in another, and whosoever discovers the Fountain first, let him wait for the other a time equivalent to fifty prayer periods. At the end of each prayer let him shout the name of his companion. Should he hear, we will find one another in this way, and should he hear not, let him who finds the Fountain of Youth depart, his conscience free of all blame.”

Thus it was agreed and Alexander went in the right direction, while al-Khidr took the left.

When al-Khidr departed from his cousin Alexander he kept on walking, his tongue never ceasing

to sing the praises of Allah with a loud, clear voice as he walked. Then suddenly he saw a light in the distance, as the light of the sun in brilliancy. As he drew nearer he found that it came from the top of a hill, rising high before him from the black, flat plain. It was a rounded, smooth hill, and he had to go all around it before he could find an ascent. When he reached the top he found that the light came from a large-sized bead, almost a handful in size, which made him blink because of its dazzling brilliancy. He stooped to pick it up, then hesitated, fearing that it might burn his hand, when suddenly he heard a voice say: "Fear not, Oh al-Khidr. Pick up the bead for, with Allah's permission, it shall be your guide to the Fountain of Youth."

Al-Khidr picked up the bead and descended the hill and the bead became his guide from henceforth in the Land of Darkness. He would throw it as far as he could and walk by its light until he came up to it. Then he would throw it again and walk farther by its light. He kept that up till he came to a land which sounded like pebbles under his feet. He picked up a handful, and when he came to the light of the bead he found that the pebbles were in truth jewels, the like of which the rest of the world does not contain. Then he walked still farther and came



At the base of that tree sprang forth a fountain whose water was white as snow.



to a land of a most aromatic perfume. He picked up a handful and found by the light of the bead that it was a most priceless variety of pungent musk.

Praising Allah for the abundance of His treasures which He hid from the eyes of His earthly creatures, al-Khidr threw away the handful of musk and resumed his foot journey.

Then he came upon another land, its earth even more aromatic than the first one. He discovered by the light of the bead that it was a land of ambergris.

Finally al-Khidr came to a great tree whose trunk was of ruby, and whose branches, high and spreading, were of amethyst. Its leaves were very large, and looked like gowns of finest silk embroidered in gold and silver, while its fruits, some of which he found lying around, were as large as pitchers and had a smell like that of musk and a taste like that of honey.

And at the base of that tree sprang forth a fountain whose water broke out in sprays as white as snow.

Al-Khidr, weary and athirst from his long journey, washed his hands and face, and quaffed deeply from the refreshing water, as sweet and delicious as the nectar of honey. As he did so, he felt immediately that a new spirit and a new energy

had set in within him and had transformed him into a new man.

Then, taking out a dried, salted fish, which he had brought with him with other provisions for the journey, he put it in the water of the fountain to clean off its salt, and behold, it turned into a live fish and swam away from him.

Al-Khidr was stunned with surprise and delight, for he realized at last that he had reached the Fountain of Youth and drank from it. This realization was turned into certainty when al-Khidr heard the same voice he had heard before, this time saying:

“Happy are you, Oh servant of Allah, for you have just drunk of the water of the Fountain of Youth and from henceforth shall never taste death.”

Al-Khidr was transported with a joy that no human being had ever before or has ever since experienced, and immediately fell down on his knees and offered a prayer of thanks to Allah for the unique grace which He had singled him out for, and at the end of his prayer he shouted aloud the name of his cousin. For, in his exultation, al-Khidr had not forgotten his cousin Alexander, and the agreement they had made together. He repeated the perform-



ance at fifty prayer periods, calling out at the end of each the name of Alexander, his cousin. But there was no answer to al-Khidr's calling except the echo of his own voice.

At the end of the fifty prayer periods, al-Khidr, filling a bottle he had with him with the water of the Fountain of Youth, returned the same way he had come by the help of the miraculous bead. From time to time, he shouted for Alexander, but heard no response.

At last al-Khidr reached the Twilight City, where he found Alexander waiting for him. And when Alexander saw al-Khidr he asked him if he had drunk from the Fountain of Youth, and al-Khidr replied:

"By the grace of Allah I did drink from the Fountain of Youth, and, in accordance with our agreement, waited for you the stated period. When you failed to arrive, I came back. But, I have preserved in a bottle a little of the miraculous water."

Saying which, al-Khidr took out the bottle which he had filled from the Fountain of Youth. But when he opened it, to his great surprise he found it empty.

Sad and disconsolate, Alexander the Great prepared for the return journey, convinced now that

not all the power and wealth of the world could cajole or buy a divine favor which Allah grants freely to whomsoever He wills.

As he was thus musing, a wise man from the Twilight City approached him with a jewel in his hand which looked like a human eye.

“See you this jewel, Oh Alexander,” said the wise man, “all the wealth of the world will not outweigh it.”

To try his contention, Alexander put the jewel in one scale of the balance, and in the other he put gold and jewels till the scale was piled to capacity. But the jewel still outweighed them.

At last the wise man took off the gold and jewels, and put a little handful of earth in their place. At once the handful of earth balanced the jewel in the shape of the human eye.

“This is but a symbol, Your Majesty,” said the wise man. “All the wealth of the world does not satisfy human avarice, but a handful of earth suffices him at death.”

For generations afterward, long after Alexander and all his contemporaries had passed away, al-Khidr continued to move about on this earth. But life began to be monotonous to him, for it was the same endless round of birth, growth and death,

the same human follies and stupidities; the same mistakes repeated at intervals of human development. The preachings and exhortations of al-Khidr fell on deaf ears and few even stopped to listen to him or take him very seriously, for he looked so youthful and inexperienced.

At last, in despair, al-Khidr departed this earth, appearing in it occasionally to the soul of some susceptible mystic or saint in some lonely cell or place of worship, and even then only in vision.

## THE TERRESTRIAL VISITS OF AL-KHIDR

**A**FTER al-Khidr, peace be on him, had departed this earth of ours it is said that every five hundred years he has made a terrestrial visit from his wanderings on other planets and in the inter-stellar spaces.

On such occasions he has circled the globe, stopping at a particular place to converse with the people.

The first time he stopped there it was a thriving city, bustling with inhabitants who were going about busily in its thoroughfares. Al-Khidr approached some of them and asked:

“Since when has this city been built?”

And they replied: “Praised be Allah, neither our fathers nor our grandfathers ever knew anything about when this city was built, for it has been here ever since the flood!”

Five hundred years passed and al-Khidr made his second visit, stopping at the same spot. The city had gone and in its place was a plain. There was nobody around, but presently some shepherds passed, driving their sheep before them. Al-Khidr stopped them and asked:

"What has become of the city that used to stand here?"

And the shepherds looked at al-Khidr vacantly and replied:

"Praised be Allah, neither our fathers nor our grandfathers ever remember a city that had stood in this place!"

Al-Khidr disappeared and after another five hundred years he returned to the same place, which, in the course of time, had been submerged and swallowed up by the sea. At its shore stood some fishermen casting their nets, and to them al-Khidr addressed the question:

"How long has this sea been here?"

The fishermen looked up from their work, puzzled, and replied:

"Praised be Allah, neither our fathers nor our grandfathers recall that there was ever anything but a sea in this place since the days of the flood!"

And again, after an absence of five hundred more years, al-Khidr visited the same spot. The sea had dried up and given place to a swampy moor, thick with a growth of rushes and reeds, and infested with wild animals. A few fishermen in small boats were casting their rods in its shallow waters.

Al-Khidr made for them and asked:

“Where is the sea that used to be here?”

The fishermen looked at each other, then at al-Khidr, and replied:

“Praised be Allah, neither our fathers nor our grandfathers before them ever mentioned that there was a sea in this place!”

Once more, after a stretch of another five hundred years, al-Khidr stopped at the same spot. And now behold! he saw a city pulsing with life and bustling with a great population. It was a city of mighty forts, imposing palaces and thriving bazaars—a city greater even than the one he had seen on his first visit.

Al-Khidr was taken by surprise. Stopping some people at a street corner, he asked them:

“Where is the swampy moor that used to stand here, and since when has this city been built?”

And, with a blank expression on their faces, the men replied:

“Praised be Allah, nobody ever recalls, nor has it ever been told us by our fathers or their fathers before them, that anything but this city has stood at this spot since the days of the flood!”



## ADVENTURES OF ARAB SLAVE TRADERS

[The fanciful voyages of Sindbad the Sailor in the *Arabian Nights* were but a romantic and exaggerated picture of the daring, hazardous life which Arab and non-Arab seamen of the Moslem world actually spent as they roamed the seven seas in their weather-beaten, storm-rocked *galleons*. The story below purports to describe a true adventure, culled from an Arab sea-captain's account of the tenth century of our era.—AUTHOR.]

A CERTAIN sea captain by the name of Ismailawayh related that one day he set out with his men from *Oman* in the year 310, corresponding to 922 A. D., with *Kanbalouh*, in Eastern Africa, as his goal. But a strong wind blew the ship beyond their destination, astrand the *Sofala* of the *Zinj*, opposite Madagascar.

When the captain sighted their location he knew that they were in a place whose inhabitants were cannibals. To stop there meant certain doom. So the captain and the crew gave themselves up for lost. They performed their ablutions, repented to Allah and recited over one another the prayer of the dead.

Suddenly the negroes surrounded the ship with

their rowboats and towed it to harbor, where it cast anchor, and the men were landed. Then the negroes carried the captain and his men before their king, who was a handsome lad for a negro and of noble bearing.

The king asked Captain Isma-ilawayh and his men about themselves and they told him that they had come to his country to trade.

"You lie," snapped the king. "Your destination was *Kanbalouh*, but a contrary wind drove you to our shore."

This, the Arab traders admitted, was the truth. "But," they told the king, "we sought to win your friendship by what we said."

"Fear not," cheered the king, "you are in my safe keeping. Bring your merchandise ashore and buy and sell unmolested."

The men unloaded their bales and straightway began their transactions with the natives. With no taxes to pay or any other expenses for food or lodging, except what they offered the king of their free will as presents, and in exchange for which he rewarded them more abundantly, the Arab traders thrived and their transactions proved highly profitable.

They remained several months in the country of

Sofala, at the end of which they sought permission from the king to depart, which permission he granted willingly. Thereupon the traders loaded their ship and when the final hour of parting arrived, the king himself, with an escort of his friends and attendants, went in a row boat to the ship to speed his guests on their voyage. With seven of his best looking attendants the king then boarded the ship, chatting on friendly terms with the traders before the ship actually set sail.

At that moment a base spirit of avarice gripped the captain, who, forgetting all the hospitality and magnanimous acts of the negro king, and eying him and his seven manly attendants only with a view of calculating profit, thought:

“This king is easily worth thirty *dinars* in the market of Oman; and the seven men together are worth one hundred sixty *dinars* at the least estimate, with their clothes worth twenty *dinars*, all told three thousand *dirhams* which are already ours with no risks involved.”

With this evil intention in mind, the captain shouted certain orders to the crew, and straightway the sails were spread and anchors lifted. All this while the king was still bidding the captain and his men farewell, cheering them with his kindly con-

versation, exhorting them to return to his country as soon as possible and promising to receive them as generously upon their return.

But when the sails were puffed by the favorable wind and the king saw that the ship was under way, his face changed.

"By your leave," he said, making a move to reach his row boats, moored to the ship. But the captain, giving his orders to cut the ropes of the row boats, turned to the king and said:

"You shall stay with us and we will take you to our home town, where we will recompense you for your kindness and repay you for all your good deeds to us."

And the king replied: "Friends, when you fell into my hands I was able to do you harm, for my people wanted to eat you as it had been their wont to do with others before you. But I treated you with utmost consideration and kindness and asked naught of you in exchange. I even accompanied you with my men and boarded your ships to bid you good-by and this is how you have rewarded me! Deal fairly with me, my friends, and return me to my native shore."

But the captain paid no attention to the king's words, nor heeded his pleading. The wind was blow-

ing favorably and before an hour had passed, the shore-land had disappeared in the distance. Night, with its enshrouding veil of darkness, set in, and the men were already on the high seas.

When dawn broke on the following morning the king and his men were segregated with the rest of the slaves, all told about two hundred heads. The king was treated like the rest of the slaves, without any special consideration. But he became suddenly taciturn and spoke not a word the entire length of the voyage. He ignored the traders completely, as if he had never known them or met them before.

Presently the ship docked at *Oman*, where the king and his attendants were sold on the auction block with the other slaves.

Years passed and again the same ship, with the same captain, Isma-ilawayh, and his men on board, went out from *Oman* with *Kanbalouh* as their destination, and again a contrary wind carried them to *Sofala* of the *Zinj*. As on the previous occasion they were forced to put in to the land against their wishes. As the negroes surrounded the ship and each party recognized the other, the captain and his men became certain that their hour had struck and that their doom was sealed without a shadow of a doubt. They performed their ablutions and recited

over one another the prayer of the dead, now with more earnestness and more certainty of death than on the previous occasion.

Then the negroes carried the Arab traders to the abode of the king and brought them before him. And behold! he was the very same king they had sold into slavery. He was sitting on the same throne as though the traders had left him an hour before.

"When we saw him," said Captain Isma-ilawayh, "we prostrated ourselves before him; our strength forsook us completely and we had no energy to move or raise our heads, as we shook in every limb, not one of us daring to speak."

After a moment of this awful suspense, the king spoke.

"Lift up your heads," he commanded, "for I give you my guarantee of safety, both for your persons and for your goods."

Some of them lifted their heads, but others could not, so overwhelmed were they with shame and mortification. But the king comforted them with kind and soft words until their spirits were restored to them and they had courage to lift up their heads with the rest. But still they dared not look him in the face, for shame and fear.

And when the traders were reassured by the



king's guarantee and their senses were completely composed, he fixed a stern look on them and said:

"Oh treacherous ones! I treated you as I did and look at the way you repaid me!"

And the traders cried out: "Have mercy on us, Oh king, and forgive us."

"I have forgiven you," he said. "Go buy and sell as you did on your first trip. I shall not disturb you."

The traders hardly believed their ears, so great was their joy. They suspected, nevertheless, that the assurance of the king was only a ruse and that he was planning a terrible revenge for them when they had unloaded their bales. They brought their merchandise ashore, however, and carried to the king a very valuable present. But the king rejected it, saying:

"Your standing with me is not such that I will accept a present from you. I will not defile my wealth with your gift, for your wealth is tainted."

The traders went about their business and when they had finished their transactions they sought permission of the king to embark, which he granted. Then as the actual time for sailing drew near, the captain went to the king and said: "Oh king, we are about to sail."

“Go your way in the keeping of Allah,” he replied.

Then the captain again spoke:

“Oh king,” he said, “you treated us away beyond our power to thank or reward you. We dealt with you treacherously and unjustly, but how did you escape and return to your native land?”

“You sold me in Oman,” he recounted, “and the slave dealer who bought me sold me to another town called Basra, whose description is such and such. There I learned how to pray and fast and also learned part of the Koran. Then my master sold me to another, who carried me to the city of the Arab king, a city called Baghdad (and here he described Baghdad), where I completed my education. I learned all of the Koran and attended the mosque prayers with the congregation. There also I saw the caliph, called *al-Muktadir*.

“I remained in Baghdad one year and part of another, when one day I saw a caravan on camels coming from Khorasan. They were a great crowd and I asked what they came for and what they were doing. And I was told that they were going on their way to Mecca for the pilgrimage. I asked what this they call Mecca was, and they informed me that it was the place of the sacred house of Allah, to which people paid meritorious visits, as a religious duty.

"I shall do well, I thought to myself, if I go with these people. And so I broached the matter to my master, who neither wanted to go himself, nor to let me go.

"So, watching for the proper opportunity, I eluded my master and joined the people on the pilgrimage, acting as their servant all the way in exchange for my food and two garments with which I performed the pilgrimage. They also initiated me into the practices and stations of the pilgrimage.

"And when the pilgrimage was over, I feared to go back to Baghdad lest my master lay hands on me and kill me. So I followed a different caravan going to Egypt, whom I likewise served on the way, until we reached Egypt.

"When I entered Egypt and saw the great river they call the Nile I asked in what direction was the source of that river, and they told me that it flowed from the Land of the Negroes on the borders of Sudan.

"So, I kept close to the bank of the Nile, going into one country and out of another, begging my way through, until I fell into the hands of some black fellows who bound me and dealt harshly with me.

"I ran away, only to fall in with another band, who took me and sold me, and again I fled. Thus it

went with me from the time I left Egypt until I reached a country on the borders of the Land of the Zinj. When I got there I disguised myself, nor was I ever more beset with fear than I was then, for I realized that I was nearing the borders of my own country.

“‘Surely another king must have sat in my place,’ I thought, ‘a king to whom the soldiery already must have sworn fealty, and from whom it would be next to impossible to wrest the kingdom. Should I therefore show myself or let any one know my whereabouts I would be carried to the king, who would kill me without much ado; or some one, seeking to curry favor with the king, might chop my head off and, presenting it to the king, might thus win favor from him.’

“Beset thus, with a terror too great to describe, I hid by day and travelled by night until I came to the sea, from whence I took ship to a certain town, all the time still disguised. Finally I reached my native shore. There I found an old woman to whom I addressed the question: ‘Is the king you have at present a just king?’

“And the old woman replied: ‘By Allah, my son, we have no king save Him alone.’ Then she related to me the story of their king, which was my story, but all the time I feigned surprise, as if I had no

knowledge of these matters, and as if I was not the person she was telling about.

"Then, continuing, the old woman told me that the people of the kingdom had agreed not to put another king over them until they found out what had become of their first one, and until they despaired of his being alive. For they were told by a soothsayer that their king was still safe and sound in the land of the Arabs.

"At daybreak the next morning I entered the city and went up to my own palace, where I found the members of my family as I had left them, except that they were in mourning, as also were the officials of my kingdom.

"Then I revealed myself to them and related to them the story of my adventure from beginning to end, and they were moved thereby to great surprise and rejoicing. And they all embraced Islam with me, and thus I regained my kingdom just a month before you came.

"And to-day I am happy for the grace of Islam which Allah has vouchsafed me; for the knowledge of the precepts of prayer, fasting, the blessing of the pilgrimage, and for the discrimination between what is lawful and what is unlawful.

"I have attained what no other king in the land of the Zinj had ever attained, and because of this

I have forgiven you, for you were the cause of my conversion to Islam.

"There is, however, one little matter for which I pray Allah may forgive me."

"And what might that be?" asked Captain Isma-ilawayh.

"It is my master in Baghdad," said the king, "from whom I ran away to the pilgrimage without his permission or consent, and to whom I had never returned. I wish that I could find an honest man among you whom I could trust with my price to my master—yea, even ten-fold—that my conscience might find rest, and I might be absolved of my obligation. But you are a treacherous and deceitful lot."

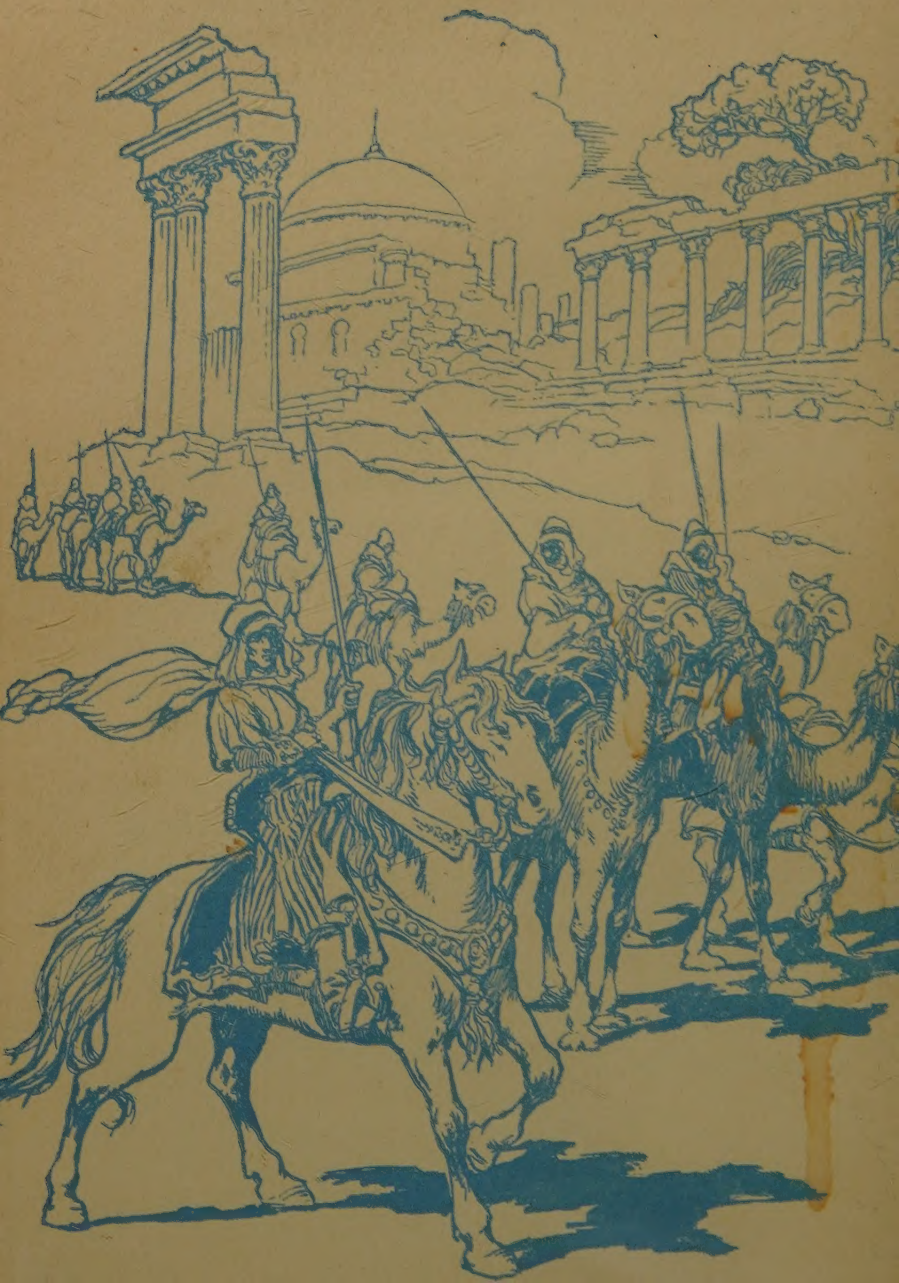
Thus the king spoke, as the traders bade him farewell. But his last words to them were:

"Go in peace, and if you return I will not treat you any differently; nay, I will even increase my generosity and kindness to you. Tell other Moslems to come and trade with us, for we have become fellow Moslems with them. As for going with you to the ship, that can never be!"

In this manner Captain Isma-ilawayh and his men parted from the King of *Sofala* and went their way.

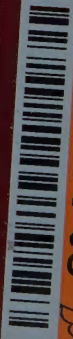












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